Gunston Classics

Bedtime Stories

Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble

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Gunston Classics

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BEDTIME STORIES

Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble

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LULU, ALICE AND JIMMIE WIBBLEWOBBLE

STORY I

LULU WIBBLEWOBBLE STUCK IN THE MUD

Once upon a time, not so very many years ago, there lived three ducks in a duck pen. And this pen was not far from where Sammie and Susie Littletail, the rabbit children, had their burrow, and it was close to the trees where Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrel brothers, learned to jump from their nest. Now I am going to tell you some stories about these ducks, and what they did.

To begin with there was the mamma duck. She was Mrs. Wibblewobble, a nice, white duck, being a cousin to Mrs. Quack-Quack, who once rescued Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, and Jennie Chipmunk from the desert island where they had been shipwrecked, you remember.

Then there was the papa duck, and, of course, his name was Mr. Wibblewobble. Also there were the children ducks; Jimmie Wibblewobble and his two sisters, Lulu and Alice.

Lulu was a duckling who could throw a stone almost as well as could Jimmie, but Alice was not so fond of doing this. She would rather dress up, and play keep house, while Lulu wanted to be off having a good time with her brother. But the three ducklings got along very nicely together just the same.

What's that? Why were they named Wibblewobble? Well, because, you see they did wibblewobble from side to side when they walked, and so they had to be named Wibblewobble, or things wouldn't have come out right. So there!

Well, the Wibblewobble family lived in a nice, wooden house, called a pen, near a pond of water, and their house had a door and two windows to it, so you see they were quite well off. In fact they were very stylish ducks, and once Jimmie Wibblewobble even rode in an automobile, but I can't tell you about that now, because you see I am going to relate to you how Lulu was caught fast in the mud. It happened one day when Jimmie and his two sisters were swimming about on the pond, just like three white boats.

"Let's see who can swim the fastest!" suddenly called the little boy duck. "We'll race over to the other side of the pond," and he put his head down under the water to get a fine, juicy bit of weed, with some water-cress sauce on it.

"Oh, no," exclaimed Alice Wibblewobble, "it's not nice for girl ducks to race," and she spread out her wings to see how they looked.

"Yes it is," said Lulu. "Come on, Jimmie, I'll race with you."

So off they started, splashing the water with their yellow, webbed feet, throwing up a little spray, which sparkled in the sunshine, just like baby's eyes when you come close to her and she laughs at you so cunningly.

On they went, faster and faster and faster, Lulu and Jimmie, while Alice remained behind, to gaze in the water which was just like a looking glass, you know. Oh, my yes, but please don't try it, unless the water is very, very shallow. You see Alice wanted to see if all her feathers were on straight, and they were, believe me, as straight as straight can be.

Well, of course, Jimmie won the race, being a very good swimmer, but Lulu was close behind him, and would have beaten, only one of her legs got caught in a weed. Now I call that too bad, don't you? For I was hoping, all the while, that Lulu would win. But you never can tell what is going to happen in this world; now can you? No, indeed.

"Let's race back again," proposed Lulu, after she had rested.

"Oh, don't race any more," spoke Alice, swimming up just then. "Let's walk out on land and see if we can't find some nice corn meal. I'm sure it must be almost dinner time, and I just love corn meal."

"I know something better than that," suddenly said a quivery-quavery voice, right beside the ducks, and when they looked around who should be there but Mr. Goosey-Gander, the grandfather of all the ducks in the pen. "I know something better than corn meal, little ones," he said, and he splashed his wings in the water.

"What is it?" asked Lulu, as quickly as you can shoot a marble into the ring and out again. "Is it gum drops?"

"No," answered Grandfather Goosey-Gander, "it is not gum drops. It is better than that. It is nice, sweet roots and grasses that grow down under water," and, with that, what do you think he did? Why, he stood right up on his head, and reached his bill down beneath the pond, and got some of the nicest grass that ever was. "There," said the old gentleman duck, poking up his head, "do as I did, little ones."

So those three Wibblewobble children did, and pretty soon, Alice and Jimmie had as much as they could eat, and raised their heads. Then they saw that Lulu still had her bill down under the water.

"She must be getting lots more than we did," spoke Alice.

"Yes, indeed," replied Jimmie. "I wonder how she can hold her breath so long?"

Just then, what should happen but that Lulu began to wave her feet in the air, and she flapped her wings until the spray went up in a regular shower, just like at Asbury Park.

"Oh, my goodness me sakes alive, and three teaspoonsfull of corn meal with pepper in!" cried Grandfather Goosey-Gander. "Lulu is stuck in the mud! We must pull her out. Quick!" That's just the way he said it.

And, would you believe me, Lulu was held fast in the mud by her dear little bill! Oh, how terribly frightened Jimmie and Alice were. They squawked and they quacked, and they tried to pull Lulu out, but she was stuck too fast.

Then all the other ducks came swimming up to see what the trouble was, and they tried to pull her out, but they couldn't, and, all the while her feet were wiggling as fast as they could wiggle, almost like Sammie Littletail's nose.

Then Grandfather Goosey-Gander called out: "What ho! Make way there! I will save her!" And with that, what do you think he did? Why, he dived right down under the water, yes, sir, right down in the mud, and he pushed, and he pulled, and he hauled and he splashed, and he yanked, and he rooted, and he twisted, and he turned, and he shoved, and then, all alone, brave old grandfather that he was, he got Lulu up from the mud, where she had been stuck by her little bill!

And it was almost time, too, let me tell you, for her breath was nearly gone. But she soon got better, and she never put her head so far down under water again.

Then all the ducks said: "Quack, Quack, Quack!" three times, they were so glad, and they swam around in a circle, and the old rooster stood on the bank and crowed, just as if he had done it all! Oh, how glad Papa and Mamma Wibblewobble were that Lulu was saved!

Now, if you do not get your feet wet, I shall tell you, to-morrow night, how Jimmie rode in an automobile.

STORY II

JIMMIE WIBBLEWOBBLE IN AN AUTO

One day, well, it must have been about a week after Lulu Wibblewobble got caught in the mud, she and Jimmie were out swimming around the pond.

"Come on," said Lulu, "let's go over and see Mrs. Greenie, the frog. She always has some candied sweet-flag root hidden away, and perhaps she will give us some."

"I don't believe there's any left," spoke Jimmie, "for Bully, the boy frog, is so fond of it that he eats all he can get."

"Well, we'll go, anyhow," went on Lulu. Just then she heard her mother calling:

"Jimmie! Lulu! Where are you going?"

"We are going over to see Mrs. Greenie," replied Jimmie.

"Wait for Alice," called Mamma Wibblewobble. "She will go with you. She is just putting a clean apron on."

"Oh, dear!" cried Lulu. "Why does Alice always make us wait while she puts on something clean?"

"I suppose," answered Jimmie, and he scratched his bill with his left leg, "I suppose it is because she wants to look nice."

"Yes," agreed Lulu, with a sort of quacking-sigh, "I suppose I ought to want to look nice, too; but, somehow I don't—ever. I always seem to be in such a hurry."

"Maybe you'll change, some day," suggested her brother.

"Maybe," spoke Lulu, and just then Alice came swimming along, looking just as nice and pretty as do some ducks which are in a picture. They all went over to see Mrs. Greenie, the old lady frog, who lived down on the bottom of the pond, at the far edge, by a big willow tree.

And, honestly, though I don't like to mention it, for fear you'll think Bully a greedy little boy, there wasn't a single bit of candied sweet-flag root in the house. No, sir, not a tiny, weeny bit. So Mrs. Greenie gave the Wibblewobble children some nice snails, which they liked very much, and then they went on swimming around. Jimmie was looking for Bully, but the little boy frog had hopped off to see his cousin. Now, in a few minutes Jimmie is going to have an adventure, and, if you please, I want you to listen very carefully, so as not to miss it.

Well, the three ducklings swam on, thinking how nice it was on the water, with the warm sun on their backs, when they suddenly came to the end of the pond. And who should be standing there but the man who owned the little puddle. And, more than that, there was another man also standing there in the road and beside him was a queer thing, with big fat wheels, fatter than the fattest duck or goose you ever saw. It was puffing away, and some smoke and a funny smell came from it. Of course, you've guessed it! An automobile! Now, what do you think about that? The ducks listened to what the men were saying, for, though the Wibblewobbles couldn't talk as the men did, they could understand our language.

"It's too bad," said the man who owned the pond. "Can't you go any farther?"

"No," said the man who had the automobile, "I can't. You see my horn, that I blow to tell people to get out of the way, is broken. I can't sound any warning, and if I ran my machine I might hurt some one; and I

wouldn't do that for the world; no, not for two worlds, if you were to offer them to me."

"That is very kind of you; very kind, indeed, I'm sure," went on the man who owned the pond. "I am glad to have met you; and I wish I could help you."

"I'm afraid you can't," answered the other. "I have to walk way down to Newark, to get a new horn for my auto, so I can blow it, to warn people out of the way."

So he started to walk off, and then what do you think happened? Why, Jimmie Wibblewobble got so excited that he gave a loud "Quack-Quack!" Oh, so loud and clear! As soon as the man who owned the auto heard it he cried out, "My gracious goodness! What's that?"

"That," replied the man who owned the pond, "is one of my ducks. Doesn't he speak very loudly?"

Then Jimmie, just to show what he could do, quacked again, harder than before.

"Oh, extemporaneousness!" cried the auto man. "That is very fine quacking, indeed. I never heard better. I have the greatest idea," he added. "Would you be so kind as to lend me that little duck? I will bring him safely back to you and not harm him in the least."

"What will you do with him?" asked the man who owned the pond.

"I will take him on the seat beside me," replied the other, "and maybe he will go 'quack-quack' whenever a person gets in the way of my auto. Then they will not be run over. Why, this little duck will be as good as an auto horn! Will you let me take him?"

"I guess so," answered the other man. "But please do not frighten him, as he is very little."

The man who owned the auto said he would be careful, and he went over to where Jimmie was, and picked him right up.

Now I should have thought that Jimmie would have been frightened, but he wasn't a bit, no, would you believe me, not a bit. So the man took him and put him on the seat and started off in the auto. Jimmie knew exactly what to do. Every time he came to a crossing he "quack-quacked" as loudly as he could, without being told, and he did the same thing whenever he saw a person in the way of the big machine.

Oh, what a fine ride he had in the auto, and how proud he was! Not too proud, you know, but just proud enough. Well, as true as I'm telling you, if Jimmie wasn't as good an auto horn as one could wish. Not a single accident happened when he was on the seat, "quack-quacking" away, and when the man went to a store and got his regular horn, with the rubber handle to it, why, he brought Jimmie right back to the pond.

Now, wasn't that quite an adventure? All the other ducks thought so anyhow. To-morrow night, if you do not slam the door, you shall hear about Alice Wibblewobble's new bonnet.

STORY III

ALICE WIBBLEWOBBLE'S NEW BONNET

When the Wibblewobble family came back to their house after a swim around the pond one bright sunny afternoon, and when the grass on the edges of the water was as green as it could be, Mamma Wibblewobble looked at her children, who were walking ahead of her. Jimmie and Lulu were throwing stones along the path, but Alice, who was as ladylike a little duck as one could wish, would not throw pebbles even, to say nothing of stones.

"I declare," exclaimed Mamma Wibblewobble, "those girls will have to have new bonnets. I must see to it at once."

"Very well," answered Papa Wibblewobble, "I will get them when I come home to-morrow. I met Mrs. Gooseyoosy this morning and she said they had a special sale of hats at the store by the barnyard gate."

"A man duck cannot get bonnets for Alice and Lulu," declared Mrs. Wibblewobble. "You would not know what to pick out! It is bad enough to have you get Jimmie's hats and shoes, but you would never know how to buy bonnets for the girls."

"Very well," answered Papa Wibblewobble, "then I will let you do the buying. I think a green colored bonnet would be nice for Alice."

"Green! With her complexion!" cried his wife. "Never! It must be blue—blue for Alice and a brown one for Lulu. Give me the money and I will start out shopping to-morrow."

So Mamma Wibblewobble started out the next day, taking Alice and Lulu with her, while Jimmie stayed home and played cross-tag with Bully, the frog, and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, who had a day's vacation.

They had lots of fun, and once Jimmie nearly fell down a great big—but there, I started to tell you about Alice Wibblewobble's bonnet, and I must not get off the track. That story about Jimmie will do for another time.

Well, you should have seen the numbers and numbers of duck-bonnets that Mrs. Wibblewobble looked at before she was satisfied with two for the girls. Not that Alice and Lulu were hard to please. Oh, my, no! But their mamma wanted them to look just right, and you know it is quite difficult to fit a bonnet on a duck and make it look like anything. The milliner said so herself, and she ought to know. But at last the two duck girls both had very fine bonnets indeed; as fine as mustard seeds, which are very, very fine. Alice had a nice blue one, and Lulu a brown one.

Well, would you ever imagine it? Something is going to happen to Alice's bonnet, and very soon, too. Just be patient and you shall hear.

"Now children," said Mrs. Wibblewobble, when they had reached the pen where they lived, "you may go out and swim around a bit with your new bonnets on until your papa comes home. I want him to see how well they fit you, for I think I have very good taste when it comes to bonnets."

"Oh, I don't want to wear my new one," spoke Lulu. "I will put on my old one and go and play with Jimmie and Bully, the frog."

So she did, but Alice, who was very fond of nice clothes, went for a swim on the pond. At first she paddled around, gazing down in the water, which was just like the looking-glass some men shave by, and she thought: "Oh, what a lovely bonnet I have! How fine I shall look when I go for a walk on Sunday!"

And just then—really I'm not exaggerating a bit—If it didn't begin to rain! Now, of course, rain couldn't hurt Alice any, for she was a duck and was used to the water, but she knew it would spoil her new bonnet. So she took it off and laid it under a big burdock plant leaf near the pond, to keep the flowers and ribbons dry.

"I wish it would stop raining," said Alice, after a while. "I want to go home," but the big drops kept on falling, and she had to remain near her bonnet for fear something would happen to it.

Then, in a little while, oh, maybe half an hour or so, all at once as quick as a wink, along came Mooleyooly, the big brown cow. Mooleyooly walked up to the burdock leaf, under which was the new bonnet, and Mooleyooly saw the pretty yellow flowers on it, and she saw the blue flowers on it and she saw the red flowers on it. Then Mooleyooly said, as she licked her lips with her red tongue:

"What have we here? It looks very nice."

"It is nice," answered Alice proudly, for she was glad to have some one, even a cow, admire her bonnet.

"It looks just like the green meadow where I live," went on Mooleyooly, "with buttercups, and daisies, and ragged sailor flowers and some red poppies growing in it. Oh, very fine, indeed. Why, those flowers are real!" exclaimed the cow, looking carefully at the new bonnet under the big leaf.

"Of course," cried Alice, "certainly they are real."

"Better and better!" went on Mooleyooly. "Most delightful, I am sure!" Then, oh, how sorry I feel that I have to tell it—then, if that brown cow didn't start right in and eat up Alice's new bonnet!

Yes, sir, every single bit, down to a bunch of green grass that looked so pretty on it. She ate it all up at one mouthful, before Alice could cry out "stop" or "halt" or "cease" or any words like that. Well, of course, Alice cried. Wouldn't you, boys and girls—I mean, of course, you girls—have done the same? Well, I guess so!

Then, when the cow saw how sorry Alice felt, Mooleyooly felt badly, too, and she cried great big tears until you would have thought it was raining harder then ever. Then, being a good cow, Mooleyooly promised to get Alice a new bonnet, which she did, made of the finest straw in the stable.

So Alice had a hat for Sunday after all, even if one was eaten up by mistake. Well, pretty soon it stopped raining and Alice went home with the bonnet the cow gave her, and Mamma Wibblewobble said it was even better than the one she had bought. Now, wasn't that rather odd? I thought so, myself.

To-morrow night if you do not sneeze, I hope to have the pleasure of telling you how Jimmie Wibblewobble almost fell over the waterfall; but don't let that alarm you the least bit, for he was saved in a most wonderful way.

STORY IV

JIMMIE AND THE WATERFALL

It was such a nice day that Mr. and Mrs. Wibblewobble decided to go visiting, as they had an invitation to call on Mrs. Greenie, the frog lady who lived at the end of the pond. So the two ducks, after seeing that the pen was in order, and the windows nice and clean, in case any company should call on them while they were out, started off, swimming very slowly, for they had their best clothes on and did not want to splash water on them.

"Now, I hope you children will be good," called Mamma Wibblewobble to Jimmie and Lulu and Alice. "Don't get into any mischief and we'll be back at supper time."

"We'll be good," promised Alice, but Jimmie and Lulu didn't say anything, though, of course they meant to be good also. Only, sometimes, you know how it is, just when you want to be good and make no trouble something is sure to happen; that is, most always. Well, that's the way it was this time.

The papa and mamma ducks hadn't been gone more than half an hour before Jimmie thought of something to do. Of course, he didn't know it was mischief but it was, all the same.

It happened that at one end of the pond where the ducks lived there was a waterfall. That is, the water ran from the pond, and fell over a high wall of stones upon some more stones down below, and made a lot of foam and a rushing, gurgling noise that was very cool in summer,

making you think of ice cream and all nice things like that. And besides this there was, near the waterfall, a big mill, with a wheel that went around and around, to grind the corn and grain.

Well, Jimmie's papa and mamma hadn't been gone more than half an hour before the little boy duck called to Lulu and Alice. "Let's see how near we can go to the waterfall," he said.

Now this was a very dangerous thing to do, because there was a strong and swift current at the fall, and any one who went too near it might be carried over. Mr. and Mrs. Wibblewobble knew this, and many times had told their children to keep away. But, you see, Jimmie forgot, or else didn't want to remember, so he called to his sisters, telling them to see how near they could go.

"I'll not," spoke Alice. "And you hadn't better either, Jimmie. You know what mamma said."

"Oh, well, the water's low now," replied Jimmie. "I don't believe there's any danger. Come on, Lulu."

"All right," said Lulu. So she and Jimmie started to swim as close as they could to the waterfall. But Alice stayed near shore, and who should come along but Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat nurse who was out for a walk. She told Alice about Sammie and Susie Littletail, and said the little rabbit children were well.

Now all this while Jimmie and Lulu were swimming nearer and nearer to the waterfall. They could hear the water splashing on the rocks below, and they liked to listen to it.

"We had better stop," called Lulu, after a while.

"No, I'm going closer," declared Jimmie. "There is no danger; come on!"

But just then Lulu felt something pulling her down toward where the big wheel went around and around, and she got frightened. Then she swam just as hard as she could toward shore, and called to her brother: "Jimmie, don't go any closer! Come back!"

But Jimmie was a boy duck, and wanted to be brave, so he answered: "I'm going just a little bit closer."

Now Lulu had a very hard time, indeed, getting to shore, as the current was so strong, but she finally managed it. Jimmie, however, kept on swimming nearer and nearer to the falls. Then, all at once, before you could stick a pin in a cushion, what should take place but that the little boy duck felt himself being pulled along by the rushing water, just as the soap floats along when you pull the plug out of the bathtub. Oh, how fast the water swept him along! Jimmie splashed and paddled with all his might, and tried to swim ashore, where Lulu was anxiously watching him, but he couldn't seem to move. There he was, being carried along to the edge of the falls, with the cruel, sharp stones below, and the big millwheel going around and around. Then Jimmie knew he was in great danger, and he cried out: "Help! Help! Help!" three times, as loudly as he could call.

Lulu and Alice heard him, and were much frightened. They started to go to the aid of their brother, but Grandfather Goosey-Gander warned them not to.

"But who will save Jimmie?" they cried.

"I will try to," answered the old gentleman duck.

So he got a rope and threw it to Jimmie, but the rope wasn't long enough, and the poor little boy duck kept getting closer and closer to the edge of the falls, and the big millwheel. Oh, how hard he was swimming, but the water was stronger than he was.

"Get a board!" cried Bully, the frog, who came hopping along just then. So the ducks and the geese got a board and threw it to Jimmie, but it floated past him, and he couldn't get upon it. Then it surely did look as if he were going to be carried right over the falls, for he was being swept nearer and more near, and he could hear the water making a terrible roaring, splashing sound on the rocks. You have no idea how scared Jimmie was, and he wished he had never gone near the falls.

Then the other ducks got a long stick and Grandfather Goosey-Gander held it out, so the little boy duck could grasp it in his bill, but the stick broke, and every one said it was too bad! Then, just as Jimmie was almost to the edge of the falls, if Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy didn't call out: "Stand aside, everybody! I am a good swimmer and I will save him!"

Then what do you think happened? Why that good, kind muskrat jumped right into the water, and hurried to where Jimmie was. She dived down, and got hold of his yellow legs in her teeth, but she took hold very gently, so as not to hurt him. Then she was such a fine swimmer that she managed to get to shore, towing and pulling Jimmie with her, for the water could not hurt Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, no matter how hard the millwheel splashed.

So that is how Jimmie was saved from the waterfall, and when his papa and mamma came home they were very glad, of course, and why shouldn't they be? But, all the same Lulu and Jimmie had to be punished for disobeying, and going too near the falls when they had been told not to, and their punishment was that they could not go in swimming for three days. And if you ever were a duck you know that was very severe punishment indeed, very severe.

But I'm not going to say that Jimmie and Lulu didn't deserve it, no indeed I'm not; not if you were to offer me an orange and a half; and I'm

very fond of oranges; very. Well, that's how things will sometimes happen in this world, won't they? do the best that you can. But now I suppose you want to know what the story will be about to-morrow night. Well, if I see a pink grasshopper, I shall tell you about a visit the Wibblewobble children paid to poor, sick, Billie Bushytail.

STORY V

A VISIT TO BILLIE BUSHTAIL

You remember how Lulu and Jimmie had to be punished for disobeying their papa and mamma, and going too near the waterfall, I suppose? They couldn't go in swimming for three days. Well, the three days were very nearly up; that is there was just one day left, so Lulu said:

"Come on, Jimmie, we will go for a walk in the woods. Don't you want to come, too, Alice?"

Now, of course, Alice could go in the water if she wanted to, for she was not punished, as she had not gone near the waterfall, but instead of going swimming alone, she stayed with her brother and sister, and I call that very kind of her. So, when Lulu asked her to take a walk in the woods, Alice answered:

"Of course, I will go with you. Who knows, perhaps we may have an adventure!" For you see Alice was very romantic. That is, she always hoped something would happen that never had happened before, and she was always hoping a fairy prince would come along and rescue her from some danger. But, up to this time, nothing like this had ever occurred, though those duck children are going to have a small adventure pretty soon, I think.

"All right," spoke Jimmie, "let's take a walk, and see what happens." So they walked on through the woods, which were very fine that day, and they felt the nice, warm, brown earth on their yellow feet, and it was

almost as good as going in the water. Pretty soon, just after they had passed under a buttonball tree, the ducklings heard a noise, and who should run out from under a bush but little Sister Sallie. You remember her, I hope; Sister Sallie, who was named after Lolly-pop-Lally, and who lived with Johnnie and Billie Bushytail.

"Why, Sister Sallie!" cried Lulu Wibblewobble, "where are you going this bright, beautiful, sunshiny day?"

"I'm going for the doctor," answered Sister Sallie.

"Are you sick?" inquired Jimmie. "You don't look so."

"No, it's Billie Bushytail," said the little girl squirrel. "He is quite ill, and I am going for Dr. Possum. Billie has a fever and headache, and he snuffles something terrible. His papa and mamma are quite worried about him. Isn't it terrible to be sick?"

"I don't know," answered Jimmie, "for I was never sick."

"I was once," remarked Alice, "and it is not nice, I do assure you. Suppose we go call on Billie Bushytail Maybe we could cheer him up."

"I think that would be lovely," spoke Sister Sallie. "You go see him, while I hurry for the doctor."

So the three Wibblewobble children walked on through the pleasant woods, until they came to the place where the Bushytail family had moved. Their home was now in a hollow stump, close to the ground, and there was a fallen tree leading up to it, just like a plank over the brook, so the ducks could easily walk up it. They went right to the front door, and Jimmie knocked with his strong, yellow bill. Mrs. Bushytail opened the door, and when she saw the little ducklings, she said:

"Oh, my dears! Do not come too near, for we don't know what disease Billie may have. I would not want you to catch it."

"Oh, we are not afraid," spoke Jimmie. "But we will not come too near. We were out walking in the woods, and we met little Sister Sallie. We came to call on Billie, and cheer him up."

"That is very kind of you," said Mamma Bushytail. "The poor little fellow is quite miserable. I put his feet in hot mustard water, and gave him some Jamaica ginger, and he is now in bed. I fear he has the epizootic, which is a very dreadful disease."

"Oh, I hope not!" exclaimed Alice, kindly. "Perhaps he only has the pip, which is not nearly so bad."

"Perhaps," answered Mamma Bushytail. "I have sent Johnnie for some quinine, and that may help Billie."

"May we see him?" asked Lulu. "Perhaps we can cheer him up."

"To be sure, you may see him," replied Billie's mamma; so she opened the door a little wider in order that the ducklings might look in the hollow-stumphouse, for of course they could not enter, as it was too small. They saw Billie, all wrapped up in blankets, in bed, and he looked quite ill. But he seemed happy in spite of that, for the hot mustard footbath had helped him some. He smiled when he saw Jimmie and Lulu and Alice. Then Jimmie gave Mrs. Bushytail some nice acorns he had picked up in the woods and had carried under his wing.

"They are for Billie," said Jimmie. Next Lulu gave the sick squirrel-boy some nice, sweet grass she had gathered on the edge of the pond, and Alice had some lovely sugared sweet-flag root, which is very good in case of sickness. Then Billie felt much better, and after a while Jimmie said: "Let's sing a funny little song for Billie." So Jimmie, Alice and

Lulu sang this little verse to cheer up poor, sick Billie, and, if you can get a good singer to sing it for you, it doesn't sound at all bad, I assure you:

Don't mind if you have to take stuff from a spoon,
Tis better than having to climb to the moon.
You might make a stumble or else have a tumble,
And then you would fall pretty soon.
We came, little Billie, to make you feel better.
At first we were going to write you a letter;
But we had no ink, dear, so that's why we came here.
We're dry now, but we'll soon be wetter.

Then Billie laughed right out loud, he felt so much better, and he ate some acorns and the sweet-flag root, nibbling at it with his sharp teeth. Then a scratching sound was heard on the stump, and who should come up it but Sister Sallie, with Dr. Possum.

The doctor said "He!" and he said "Hum!" and he said "Ahem!" Then he felt Billie's pulse and made him put out his tongue. Then Dr. Possum exclaimed: "Why, this little squirrel isn't sick at all! No, sir! Not at all. My goodness me; no, indeed! Why, the very idea! Sick? I guess not!"

But Mrs. Bushytail said her little boy had been very ill, and Dr. Possum answered:

"Well, if he was sick, these little ducks have cured him. They are just as good at doctoring as I am; yes, indeed; and a thermometer or two besides. There is no need for me."

"It was the funny little song that cured me," said Billie. Then he got out of bed and began frisking around; the doctor went home, and the little

squirrel was all well. After a while Jimmie, Lulu and Alice had to leave, and they went home, feeling very happy for the good they had done to Billie Bushytail, for it always makes you feel happy to help some one. Now, if you promise not to whisper in school next week you shall hear to-morrow night how Jimmie tried to become a flying machine.

STORY VI

JIMMIE AS A FLYING MACHINE

One day, I think it must have been about three-and-a-half-quacks past cornmeal time, there was a great commotion in the yard, and around the pond where Jimmie Wibblewobble and his two sisters and his papa and mamma lived. There was a great fluttering in the air, and something, colored in beautiful tints, flew down and settled on the water with a little splash.

"My goodness, what is that?" asked Alice Wibblewobble, who was easily frightened. At first no one knew, for, though the creature was shaped just like a duck, it was not colored like any duck Jimmie had even seen. It was gold and bronze and green, with little patches of red and blue here and there, and was a most beautiful creature.

"Maybe that is a fairy," suggested Lulu, who sometimes read fairy stories.

"Oh, if it only might be one, and could tell me where the fairy prince is!" exclaimed Alice, with a sigh.

"Nonsense!" cried Jimmie, who was just going off to see his friend Bully, the frog. "Stuff and nonsense!"

"That's what I say, too," called out the strange creature. "Nonsense! I'm not a fairy at all. I'm a duck like yourselves, only I am a wild duck." Then its wings beat the air and water, and the wild duck arose and flew right over the pond and back again, as quickly as could be.

"My goodness! How do you do that?" asked Jimmie, who never could fly more than a few feet.

"Why," answered the wild duck, "I just did it, that's all."

"Snippery, snappery snails!" cried Jimmie, "you're just like a flying machine that my papa read about in the paper."

"Well, somewhat like one, perhaps," admitted the wild duck. "I can fly a long distance. Did you ever try?"

"No," answered Jimmie; "I never did."

"Perhaps you would like to try now," suggested the other. "I will stay here a little while, and show you. It is very easy. You can just as well become a flying machine as not. Come, I will fly up on the fence. You come up here, too, and when I say 'Go!' why start off, and, who knows? perhaps you will do as well as I. Don't be afraid."

"Of course, I'll try," said Jimmie, very bravely, for he was always wanting to try new things.

"So will I," cried Lulu. "I want to fly, too."

"Oh, you had better be careful," warned Alice, who was a very cautious duckling, never getting into danger if she could help it.

"Oh, we'll be careful, but we are going to become flying machines just the same," said Jimmie.

So the wild duck flew up on the fence, which was at one edge of the pond, and, oh, how beautiful he looked with the sun shining on his finely colored feathers. Jimmie had quite a struggle to get on the top rail of the fence, and so did Lulu, but they finally managed it, and, just as they stood beside the wild duck, who should come along but Grandfather Goosey-Gander. He asked the two Wibblewobble children what they were going to do, and when Jimmie said they were going to learn to become flying machines, the old duck said, "Humph!" just as quickly as he could.

"If you had such hard work getting to the top of the fence, how do you think you can fly across the pond?" he asked, and then he sneezed three times, for he was catching cold.

"Oh, we will do it," answered Jimmie, for, of course, you see, he really thought he could.

But something is going to happen, just as sure as you can add up two and three and make five out of them.

"Are you all ready?" asked the wild duck of Jimmie and Lulu, as they stood beside him, balanced on the fence rail.

"Yes," replied Jimmie, trying to stop his heart from beating so rapidly, "we are ready, Mr. Wild Duck. You fly and we will fly also."

"Watch me carefully," said the beautiful creature, "and do exactly as I do."

They were just about to fly, when the old rooster, who had been picking up corn down the road, come running up.

"Hold on!" he cried, "I can fly as good as that wild duck! Wait for me and we will have a race!"

So they waited until the old rooster got up on the fence rail, too. Then the wild duck counted: "One to begin with, two for a show, three to make ready and four to go!"

Then he flapped his wings, gave a loud "squawk-squawk" and sailed over that pond as nice as you please.

Well, of course, I've got to tell exactly what happened, or it wouldn't be fair. Jimmie tried to fly, but I wish you could have seen him. He only went a little way, and then, because his body was too heavy for his wings, or because his wings were too light for his body, he came flopping right down to the ground, ker-thump, and he hurt his nose considerably, let me tell you, for considerably is quite a lot.

Well, poor Lulu, if she didn't fall, too! Yes, sir, she turned a somersault right in the air, before all those watching ducks, and she, too, came down ker-flimmax-ker-flump, and she hurt her left-hand wing. Then she cried once, "Boo-hoo!" just like that. Then she stopped.

Jimmie didn't cry at all, if you'll believe me, no, sir, not a mite, but he felt badly all the same. And then that rooster! Oh, dear me, how foolish some roosters are, anyhow, now aren't they, really? Well, he started off all right, but just then the wind got in the wrong place, and it turned him upside down. Now, no rooster can fly upside down, no matter what else he can do, so that one came flippity-flop down into the water ker-splash-ker-sposh; and one more besides! Maybe he didn't feel mortified!

But that wild duck! Oh, my, goodness me! How he did fly. Around and around, and around that pond he went, never touching the water once. Then he came to where Jimmie and Lulu were, and he told them how sorry he felt for them, before he flew away to a far, far distant land, where only wild ducks live. Then Grandfather Goosey-Gander went up to those two Wibblewobble children, and so did Alice, to lend Lulu her handkerchief. And Grandfather Goosey said: "It is better for tame ducks to stay on the water, or on land. They were not made for flying." So that was the end of Jimmie trying to become an air ship. To-morrow night you may hear about Lulu and the gold fish, that is if the lemon squeezer doesn't pinch me.

STORY VII

LULU AND THE GOLD FISH

Well, here we are again, after a rest over night, and all ready for another story, I suppose. Let me see, it was to be about the fairy prince and Alice Wibblewobble—no, hold on there, I'm wrong. I know it. Lulu and the gold fish; to be sure! Well, here we go.

Now, of course, I could make this about the fairy prince—in fact, he has something to do with this story—but as the gold fish has more, I put her name at the top.

Lulu Wibblewobble, the little duck girl, who could throw stones almost as straight as a boy, was swimming around the pond near the pen where she lived. It was a nice, warm, sunshiny day, and Lulu wanted to do something, but she didn't just know what. Jimmie, her brother, was off playing with Bully, the frog, and Alice, her sister, was straightening out her feathers in the back parlor bedroom, where a piece of tin could be used for a looking glass.

All at once Lulu's mamma called to her:

"Lulu, I want you to go to the store to get some acorn meal and a yeast cake. I am going to set bread to-night. Hurry, now, that's a good girl."

"All right, mamma," answered Lulu, and she steered herself around, just like a motorboat in the water, and started for the store, paddling as hard as she could.

She had not gone very far, with the little ripples and waves chasing each other across the pond, before she saw something swimming close beside her. Lulu looked down, and what do you think she saw? Well, you might guess, but then again, you might not, so I'll tell you. It was a gold fish.

Oh, it was such a beautiful gold fish, with red and silvery spots and streaks, and a long, feathery tail that looked like lace in the water.

"Hello!" exclaimed Lulu; "I didn't know you lived here."

"Oh, yes," answered the fish. "I have lived here for some time, but, you see, during the cold weather I stay down in the mud. However, as it is now spring, I have come up, and I am going to play around all summer."

"That's nice," remarked Lulu. "What's your name?"

"My name is Fannie Tail," replied the fish. "You see I got that name because my tail is shaped like a fan, but most persons just call me Fan Tail. You may, if you like."

"All right," agreed Lulu. "I will. My name is Lulu, but you may call me Lu, if you wish."

"Good," answered the fish, turning a double somersault in the water and wiggling her right fin as if trying to shake hands. "Now we are well acquainted. And may I ask where you are going?"

So Lulu told the fish girl about having to go to the store, and Fan seemed quite pleased to hear it. The two swam on together for some distance, the fish just under the water and Lulu on top. Pretty soon Lulu asked Fan where she was going, and the gold fish replied:

"I am going to the drug store for some sweet flag root for the fairy prince," and once more the fish girl turned a double somersault and opened her mouth wide, for she had a cold in her head, in consequence of being so wet. But as it is very difficult to write a story and make a gold fish talk as if she had a cold in the head, I have decided to make Fan talk just ordinarily. You never would have known anything about the cold if I hadn't mentioned it, so it's just as well.

"Pardon me," said Lulu, just like a telephone girl, "but did I understand you to say you were going for some sweet flag root for the fairy prince?"

"Yes," answered Fan Tail, "that's what I said."

"But!" cried Lulu. "A fairy prince! I never knew there were fairies in this pond!"

"Neither did lots of other persons," replied Fan. "It's supposed to be a secret, but I'll tell you. And, another thing. There is something strange about this fairy prince. Do you promise never to tell?"

"Yes," answered Lulu. "Cross my heart I'll never tell," and she lifted one leg out of the water and crossed her heart as well as she could.

"Then," said the gold fish in a whisper, "If you will come with me I will show you the fairy prince. That is, after I go to the drug store for him. But mind, it's a great secret."

So the two swam on together, but Lulu felt sad. And the reason she felt sad was this: Her sister Alice, who was very romantic—that is, she continually wanted things to happen that never could happen—Alice always had wished to see a fairy prince. Now, unless Fan would let Lulu tell the secret, Alice would never see a prince. And to think he was right in the same pond with her! Oh, it's dreadful to have a secret you can't tell even to your own sister, I think.

Lulu sighed so that she made quite a wave in the pond, and when the fish saw this she knew something was the matter. So she asked Lulu what it was, and Lulu told her how Alice was just crazy to see a fairy prince, and had been dreaming of one for ever and ever so long.

"And I've promised not to tell," ended Lulu. "Poor Alice! How disappointed she will be not to see a real, live fairy!"

"Well, perhaps it is too bad," admitted Fan Tail, and she sneezed so hard that the water flew up in a spray, just like a fountain. "Perhaps I shall let you off from your promise," the gold fish went on. "Yes, I think you may bring Alice to see the fairy prince."

"And Jimmie? Jimmie's my brother. I know he would love to see him, too. May he come?"

"Yes, you may bring Jimmie also. But mind, I don't want you to be disappointed. Most fairy princes are disappointing, so don't say I didn't warn you."

"Oh, that will be all right," spoke Lulu, now quite happy again. "May I bring them this afternoon?"

"Oh! I suppose so, but no one else, mind. You see the fairy prince is rather bashful."

So Lulu promised she would bring no one else, and she hurried to the store and back again. Fan Tail, the gold fish, went to the drug store for the sweet flag root for the fairy prince, and on the way she stubbed her nose against a stone, which made her cold in the head worse than ever; but of course we have nothing to do with that except to feel sorry for her.

When Lulu got home she was so excited she dropped the yeast cake in the pond, and it would have gotten all wet only it was wrapped in tin-foil. Then she told Alice and Jimmie about the fairy prince she was going to see, but, as this story is too long already, I must stop, and in case the postman does not blow his whistle too loud and scary, I shall have the pleasure, to-morrow night, of telling you about the fairy prince. And I hope you won't be disappointed.

STORY VIII

WHO THE FAIRY PRINCE WAS

Mamma and Papa Wibblewobble were sitting in front of the duck pen, talking with Grandfather Goosey-Gander and the big rooster. They were so busily engaged in conversation about the best way to serve cold corn meal mixed with water, that when

Lulu asked her parents if she and Jimmie and Alice could go for a swim, Mrs. Wibblewobble said:

"Yes, my dear, but be careful you don't get wet."

Now wasn't that a funny thing for a duck mamma to say to her little duck girl? But Mamma Wibblewobble was absent minded, so we must excuse her. You see she thought Lulu wanted to go for a walk in the woods. Well, it didn't much matter, but I thought I would speak about it.

"Can we go?" asked Jimmie, when Lulu came back.

"Yes," she answered. "Hurry now, for we are going to see the fairy prince, as the gold fish promised."

"Oh, I'm so excited I can hardly wait!" exclaimed Alice, who was quite romantic, as I have explained. "Am I swimming straight, Lulu? I wouldn't for all the world, have a fairy prince see me swimming crooked."

"Oh, don't be so fussy!" called out Jimmie. "I wish Bully, the frog was here. He and I could have some fun."

"Oh, no!" cried Lulu. "We are the only ones allowed to see the fairy prince. It's a secret, and he is quite bashful."

"How are you going to find him?" asked Jimmie. "This is a large pond, and it's going to be quite a task to locate the fairy prince, or even the gold fish."

"Oh! let's don't worry," suggested Alice. "Worrying is one of the very worst things you can do, especially when there is anything in it about a fairy. Don't you know that fairies are especially made not to worry? We will find our way somehow. Either a golden ball will appear and roll on

before us to show us the right direction, or else a magical boat will suddenly come up in the water, and we can ride right to the place."

"Hu! What do we want of a boat?" asked Jimmie. "Can't we swim? I don't believe much in this fairy business, anyhow."

"Then, if you don't believe, you never will see the fairy prince," declared Alice. "Only those who believe in fairies can see them. I know, for I've read lots of fairy stories." You see Alice was very much in earnest about this matter.

So the three children swam on together over the pond, and the waters sparkled in the sun, until you would have thought there were thousands of diamonds floating on top. The breeze blew just enough to make little ripples, and altogether it was a very fine day. They went on and on, until pretty soon they were in a part of the pond they had never before visited. Tall rushes grew on either side, and the long meadow grass came right down to the edge of the water and trailed in it, making little green caves in which to hide. It was cool and quiet there, and very lovely. The ducks liked it, but still there was no sign of the fairy prince; and the gold fish had not come to show them the way.

"I don't believe we'll ever see any fairy prince," said Jimmie.

"Oh! but the gold fish promised me," spoke Lulu.

"Hush!" cried Alice. "We must keep very quiet. We may meet the magical boat, or the golden ball, any minute."

And just then, what should happen, but that they heard a voice singing. Yes, sir, just as true as I'm telling you, a voice singing, right down under the water. And this is what it sang, in silvery tones, just like the little bell that tinkles on pussy's neck:

The fairy prince lies deep and dark,
Waiting for the firefly's spark;
If you wish to see him now,
Follow me, and make a bow.

And, all at once, who should appear but Fan Tail, the gold fish. She popped right out of the water, and when she saw the three duck children she asked:

"Did you hear me singing?"

"Was that you?" asked Lulu.

"It was," replied Fan. "But why don't you do as I said? If you wish to see the fairy prince you must bow. He always wants people to do that."

So Lulu and Jimmie bowed once, and Alice bowed three times, and when they asked why she did that she said you must always do things by threes where fairies are concerned.

"Now, follow me," called the gold fish; so they swam farther and farther up the part of the pond where they had never before been. It got smaller and smaller, until it was like a little brook, with rushes bending over it, while the water whispered to the green stems.

"The fairy prince lives in there," suddenly said the gold fish, poking her head up out of the water, so she could speak more plainly, and she pointed with her fin to a hole in the bank. "He will come out presently. Bow your prettiest." Well, you can just imagine how excited the duck children were. Alice fairly trembled, and even Jimmie was interested, as they all bowed.

"All ready now!" went on the gold fish. "Behold the fairy prince. Behold! Behold!" and she made a booming noise under the water, just

like the big bass drum, when a man in the circus jumps over sixteen elephants and a quarter all at once.

Then, all of a sudden, oh! maybe in a second and a little more what should come out of that hole in the side of the bank, just above the water, what, I say, should come out of that hole—now be careful, take tight hold of the arms of the chair, and hold your breaths, so as not to be disappointed, what should come out of the hole but a big, brownish-black, spotted with red and yellow, wrinkle-legged, hard-shelled, sharp-beaked mud turtle! There, now!

At first the duck children were so frightened and surprised that they did not know what to do or say. They had expected something so different. Did you? Well, I'm awfully sorry, but you know I'm not responsible. I merely tell what happens.

"Why, that isn't a fairy prince!" cried Jimmie, speaking first.

"Of course not," added Lulu.

Then the gold fish came quite close to them and whispered something.

"Do you know," said Fan Tail, "I have always had my doubts about it myself. He says he's the fairy prince—insists on it, in fact,—and he has it engraved on his visiting cards. But I have my doubts, only I don't dare say so, for you see I work for him, run errands and the like of that; so far be it from me to say he is not a fairy prince. I have, however, guided you to him. Behold, the fairy prince!" and she called the last real loudly, for the mud turtle was looking right at her. Then she added in a whisper: "But I have my doubts."

"Hush! Oh hush, please!" begged Alice. "Of course he is a fairy prince! They are always disguised like that—always appearing as something different from what they really are, you know. Sometimes they are toads,

and sometimes frogs, and sometimes mud turtles, I suppose, though I never heard of any of the last kind. But of course he is a fairy prince." Then she bowed again, three times, and said: "Fairy prince, I salute thee."

"Fairy nothing!" grunted Jimmie. "He is no more a fairy than I am."

Then the mud turtle heard them talking, and he stuck his head farther out of the shell, and he looked around with his snaky neck, and he came a little more out of the hole, and said:

"Of course I am the fairy prince. Everybody knows that. I've been a fairy prince for ever and ever so long." And then he sneezed, just to show that, though he was a fairy prince, he was not proud.

"What shall I do, O fairy prince, to change you back into your own rightful shape?" asked Alice. "Tell me, and I will do it at once. Dost thou need three drops of magical water?"

"No," answered the mud turtle, "not any at all, thank you, so much. I am a fairy prince, but I am satisfied with my shape as I am; and I do not want to change. I have always been this way, and I always want to stay so. Please be so kind as to go away. I want to eat my dinner."

So they hurried away, for the gold fish whispered that the mud turtle was always cross when he ate. Jimmie and Lulu were much disappointed, but Alice was not, for she insisted that the mud turtle was really wonderful, and was a fairy prince in disguise. Now what do you think about it? I leave it to you. But whatever you may think please don't be hasty. Take plenty of time. Perhaps you had better wait for the story to-morrow night, which if the cow bell doesn't ring and awaken the doll in the baby carriage will be about how Grandfather Goosey-Gander got into trouble and out again.

STORY IX

GRANDFATHER GOOSEY-GANDER IN TROUBLE

On their way home, after having seen the mud turtle fairy prince, Jimmie, Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble, of course, talked of nothing else. They wished the prince had done something wonderful, instead of merely sending them away when he ate his dinner, and they hoped he would perform a magical feat another time. He really did, as I shall tell you about later, if I do not forget it. The gold fish swam a little way back with the duck children, as she said the prince always liked to be alone when he ate.

"Well, how did you like him?" asked Fan Tail of the ducks.

"Not very much," replied Lulu. "I never did care for mud turtles."

"Nor I," added Jimmie.

"I don't believe he was really a mud turtle at all," declared Alice. "He was a real, truly, fairy prince, and he only looked like a mud turtle, because we did not have the right kind of eyes with which to see him or else because we had no faith in him. It is always so, in fairy stories. You must believe, or you can't see the beautiful things."

"Well, I'd rather have some snails to eat," said Jimmie. "You don't care how they look; it's how they taste. I'm never going to bother with fairies again."

It was about three days after this that Jimmie and Lulu were walking in the deep, green woods, under the trees, picking tender leaves and roots to eat. They were hoping they might meet Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels whom they had not seen for some time. Alice stayed home to curl her feathers.

All at once, as they were walking along, the little boy and girl duck heard a funny noise.

"What's that?" cried Jimmie.

"I don't know," answered Lulu. "It sounds like some one calling."

And, sure enough, it was. As they stopped to listen they could hear some one crying: "Help! Help! Oh, help!"

"Let's go and see who it is," suggested Jimmie.

"Maybe it's a dog, or a bad rat, or a fox," objected Lulu.

"No," said her brother, "they would never call for help. Come on."

So they walked on, looking this way and that, to see what they could see; on and on through the woods, until, just as they came from behind a big oak tree, what should they catch sight of, but poor, Grandfather Goosey-Gander, caught fast in the middle of a pile of brush.

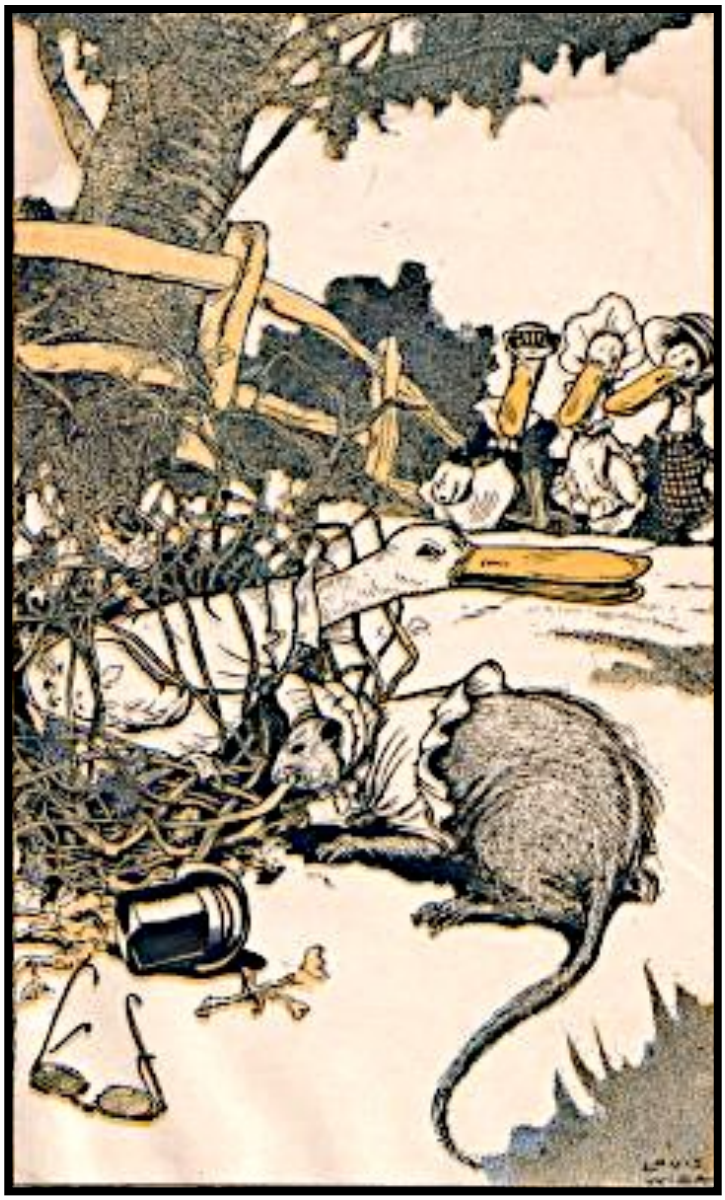
"Oh dear me! Oh my goodness me sakes alive! Oh, floppy! floppy! floppy! Oh, a bag of salt and some corn meal!" cried the poor old gentleman duck. "I am in a terrible state! Help me!"

Then Lulu and Jimmie ran right up to him, and asked him what was the matter.

"Oh dear," he said, "I really can't say. I've lost my glasses, and I can't see very well. All I know is that I was walking in the woods, thinking what a nice day it was, when, all of a sudden, in about a quack and a half, I found myself caught fast. And the worst part of it is that I can't get loose!"

"Let me take a look," said Jimmie.

So he went quite close and looked, and he saw that Grandfather Goosey-Gander's right leg was held in between two sticks. The old gentleman duck was in great pain.



"Is my leg broken?" he asked Jimmie.

"No," answered the little boy duck, "but some of the skin is scraped off."

"I knew it!" cried Grandfather Goosey-Gander. "Now I won't be able to go fishing next week. Oh, I do seem to have the worst luck; don't I?"

"We will get you out," Lulu said to him, and then she and her brother went to the aid of the poor old duck. They pushed this way and that way,

and they pulled that way and this way, and they lifted up on the pieces of sticks, and they pushed down on them, but it was no use. Poor Grandfather Goosey-Gander was stuck fast there, and I think it was a shame, but it couldn't be helped. Oh my no, and a bit of peppermint candy besides!

"Well, I guess I will have to stay here and die," said the discouraged old duck, and he felt so badly that he wept. Lulu and Jimmie cried also, they felt so sorry. The three of them cried, and their tears were so many that if they had cried long enough there would have been quite a pond there, and they could have gone in swimming. That is, of course, all but Grandfather Goosey-Gander, and he couldn't swim for he was held fast. But they didn't weep long enough.

"Let's try once more," said Lulu, after a while, and then she and Jimmie tried harder than ever to get grandfather's leg out. But they couldn't.

"If I only had a saw!" cried Jimmie, "I could get him loose."

"Ha! perhaps I can help you!" suddenly exclaimed a voice.

Then, as quickly as you can break an egg by dropping it on the floor (only of course you must not do it without permission), who should appear but Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat. She was out walking with Sammie and Susie Littletail.

"Oh, somebody do please help me!" cried Grandfather Goosey-Gander. "I've lost my glasses, my leg is caught, and I have a pain in my back. Oh, oh, oh!"

"I'll gnaw through those sticks in a jiffy!" cried Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, for a jiffy is very quick time indeed. Oh, yes, and a broken down couch besides!

So, telling Sammie and Susie Littletail to stand back, and calling to Jimmie and Lulu to remain with them, the muskrat nurse set to work to free Grandfather Goosey-Gander. Her teeth were like the chisels the carpenter uses and in a few seconds the old duck's leg was free. Oh, how glad he was, and how thankful to Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy! Of course the duck and rabbit children also were glad.

Then Jane gnawed out a little crutch for grandfather to walk with, as he was a trifle lame, and what do you think? Why, Susie Littletail found his glasses for him; and Sammie and Jimmie rubbed his back so nicely that the pain all went out of that. Now I call that doing something don't you?

Well, Grandfather Goosey-Gander started for home, and Jimmie and Lulu asked Sammie and Susie to come and play with them. Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy said they might, and they had a fine time under the trees in the woods, playing tag of all kinds; cross-tag, wood-tag, dirt-tag, leaf-tag, stump-tag, and a new kind, called acorn-tag, which I will explain about later. Then the bunny children went home with their nurse and Jimmie and Lulu also went home and about two days after that a very funny thing happened.

What it was you shall hear to-morrow night if the trolley car doesn't get off the track, but I'll let you know this much—it's going to be about the rooster trying to swim.

STORY X

THE ROOSTER TRIES TO SWIM

Grandfather Goosey-Gander was quite lame the next day from having been caught in the brush pile, and could not go very far away from the duck pen. He did manage to hobble around on the crutch which Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy made for him, and he sat in a sunny corner, reading the newspaper with his glasses which Susie Littletail found. He was reading away as Alice, Lulu and Jimmie Wibblewobble were playing about on the edge of the pond, and the little duck children made so much noise that the old grandfather could not understand what was in the papers.

"Can't you children play something quiet?" he asked for Papa and Mamma Wibblewobble had gone visiting, and Grandfather Goosey-Gander was left to mind the house. "Play some nice, easy game," he suggested.

"Let's play acorn tag," said Lulu.

"All right, you're it," answered Jimmie. So they each took an acorn which they found in the woods and put it in their bills. Then Lulu had to chase after Jimmie and Alice, and when she touched either one of them with her wing she had to call out: "You can't run a little bit, I've tagged you, and now you're it." Yes, that's what she had to call, and she had to do it without letting the acorn fall out of her bill. Now, if you think that's a very easy thing to do, just you try it, that's all.

Lulu didn't have much trouble putting her wing on Jimmie or Alice, but, every time she tried to call out the little verse the acorn would roll out of her bill and she'd have to start all over again, or it wouldn't have been fair. So it was some time before she got over being "it," and then it was Jimmie's turn.

Well, they played acorn tag for quite a while, and, when they got tired of that they all went in swimming. They swam around in circles, and criss-crossed and went in squares, and in triangles and all sorts of queer

figures, including eight, nine, ten, which are very difficult figures, indeed, for little ducks.

While they were swimming away, having lots of fun, and far enough off so that Grandfather Goosey-Gander could read his paper in peace, who should come down to the edge of the pond but the rooster. His name was Mr. Cock A. Doodle, and he was very proud. He walked right down to the edge of the water, and looked at the ducks. Then he crowed as loud as he could, and flapped his wings, just as if he were saying:

"There! I'd like to see any of you do that! Ha! Hum! Oh my, yes, indeed!"

"How do you do, Mr. Cock A. Doodle?" asked Jimmie.

"Ahem! I am pretty well, my young friend," replied the rooster. "And how may you happen to be to-day? And how are your sisters, Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble?"

"We are very well," answered Lulu and Alice, and Lulu went on: "Don't you wish you could swim, Mr. Doodle?"

"I can," said the rooster, and he strutted back and forth at the edge of the pond. "Certainly I can swim. What put the notion into your heads that I can't?"

"We never saw you," spoke Jimmie.

"Ahem! Perhaps not. You never saw me stand on one foot and jump over a barrel, but that doesn't prove that I can't do it," replied Mr. Doodle. "I can swim if I choose. I have never cared to, that's all."

"Try now," suggested Lulu, for she didn't believe that rooster could swim, no matter what he said.

"Oh, the water is too cold to go swimming now," said Mr. Doodle. "I never swim in cold water."

"Why, it's as warm as warm can be," declared Alice, and she splashed a few drops upon the rooster, so he could feel it.

"Well, er—ahem! The wind is blowing too much," said the rooster, when he felt the nice, warm water.

"Why, it doesn't blow at all," answered Jimmie.

"Well, I haven't my swimming shoes on," objected Mr. Cock A. Doodle. "I can't swim without them. You ducks have pieces of skin between your toes, so the water won't slip through, but I haven't my webbed feet on."

"Oh, that is very easily fixed," said Lulu. "We will take some pieces of cloth, and tie them over your claws to make them like ours. Do you think you could swim then?"

"Yes," answered the rooster, "I think I could." You see he had no more excuses to make. Oh, wasn't he a tricky old rooster, though, eh?

So Lulu and Jimmie got some bits of cloth, and, with long pieces of ribbon grass, they bound the cloth on the rooster's claws so his feet looked something like a duck's.

"Now come on and we'll have a swimming race," suggested Jimmie. "Walk right down into the water as we do. It won't hurt you the least bit, Mr. Doodle."

"Pooh! Do you think I'm afraid?" inquired Mr. Doodle, and he actually did walk right into the water, while all the ducks and chickens and geese looked on in wonder, for they had never seen the rooster swim, and didn't believe he could. Oh, but Mr. Doodle was proud! He even tried to

crow as he stepped into the water, but, as he wasn't used to it, it made his breath feel just as if it were choking him when he tried to swallow.

Yes, he tried to crow, but all the noise he could make was a sort of a gasp and a sigh and a cough and a splutter and a sneeze and choke and a whimper.

"Ha! Aha! Ahem! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho I will now swim" cried the rooster, and then the water got so deep that he couldn't wade any more, and he had to float. He struck out with his feet, and tried to paddle just as he saw Lulu and Alice and Jimmie doing, but a very funny thing happened.

The rooster went right around in a circle, for he only used one leg at a time. Then he got dizzy, and went around the other way. Then he had to stop. Next he flapped his wings and splashed the water all over.

Say, I wish you could have seen him. It was as good as a circus! He got his tail all wet, and his back got all wet, and, as his feathers weren't the kind that water runs off from, he was soon as soaked as your umbrella ever was. That made him heavy and he began to sink. Oh, how he splashed and spluttered around in that pond! He couldn't swim any more than my typewriter can, and, all at once, what do you suppose happened?

Why, he felt himself sinking more and more and more. Oh, it was terrible!

"Save me! Oh, save me!" Mr. Doodle cried. "I am going down! Help me, please! Help! Help! Help!"

Then the duck children felt sorry, and swam to him as fast as they could. Each one took hold of that poor rooster; Lulu and Alice by a wing, and Jimmie by the rooster's tail, and they towed him to shore. Oh, but he was a sorry looking sight! He couldn't even crow, nor flap his wings.

"I thought you said you could swim," spoke Jimmie.

"Hush!" begged Alice, who was very kind-hearted. "Don't be casting up! Don't make him feel bad."

"Oh, I feel bad enough without that," said Mr. Doodle, sighing. "I guess the water wasn't right for swimming to-day," and with that he walked off, and hid himself in some leaves, to get dry, for he hadn't any towels at his house. But the Wibblewobble children kept on swimming, for they knew how; and now, let me see; well, how about a story of an enchanted castle for to-morrow night; eh? that is if the scissors don't cut up too much.

STORY XI

ALICE WIBBLEWOBBLE'S ENCHANTED CASTLE

Alice Wibblewobble had made up her mind to find out more about the fairy prince. She couldn't believe he was only a mud turtle. She felt sure he was merely in that form until some one came along, pronounced the magical words, or sprinkled the magical water on him, or did something else, to change him back again.

"I think I will have another talk with him," she said. "Perhaps, if I go all alone, he will tell me what to do. Oh, wouldn't it be perfectly lovely if I could change him into a king with a golden-diamond-ruby crown. Yes, I certainly shall go."

So Alice swam off up the pond, in the direction the gold fish had once led Lulu and Jimmie and her.

Well, Alice went on and on and on, for ever so long, but she couldn't seem to find the place where the mud turtle fairy prince lived. She saw the green rushes hanging over the water's edge, she saw the bright ripples, just like diamonds that might be in a king's crown, and she heard the birds singing; but there was no mud hole where the fairy prince lived.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Alice. "I'm afraid I'm lost."

"What? Lost in this beautiful place?" asked a voice just above her head, and, looking up, Alice saw a dear little yellow bird sitting on a tree over the water.

"Yes," said Alice, and a tear came into her eye, and ran down her yellow bill. "I am lost. I can't find the fairy prince."

"Oh, that is too bad," said the little yellow bird. "I don't just know what a fairy prince is, but it must be dreadful not to be able to find one when you want to. Do not feel badly, however. I can take you to an enchanted castle, if that will do."

"Oh, can you?" cried Alice. "That will be lovely. I had almost as soon see an enchanted castle as a fairy prince. Is it a really, truly one?"

"Oh, yes," answered the bird. "It certainly is. It is the most beautiful place in all the world. Come, and I will show you."

Then Alice felt delighted, and she walked out of the water, and waddled along on the land. The bird flew along, going slowly, so as not to get ahead of Alice. On and on they went, over green fields, and through the woods, until, pretty soon, they came to a place where the bird stopped.

"We are near the enchanted castle," he said. "But you must be very careful."

"Why?" asked Alice.

"Oh, because every once in a while a lot of water spouts up out of the castle, and it might drown you, if you were not careful."

"Oh, I don't mind water," answered Alice.

Then they went on a little farther, and, in a short time, oh, perhaps about as long as it takes you to peel an orange, and put some salt on it, they came to a most beautiful place. I wish you could have seen it! At first Alice thought the rainbow had fallen from the sky, there were so many colors. There was red and green and blue and orange and violet and

yellow and pink and purple and even some of that skilligimink color, that once turned Sammie Littletail sky-blue-pink.

Then the little duck girl saw that the colors were all from different flowers that smelled just like mamma's perfume bottles. Next, as she walked on a little farther, she saw a great pile of stones high in the air, and, around the bottom of the pile was a big basin of water, not quite as large as the pond at the ducks' pen, but nearly, Green vines and flowers were growing in and out among the stones, and birds were flying here and there, singing.

"This," said the little yellow bird, "is the enchanted castle. I live here all summer, and so do all my friends. Sometimes we bathe in the water, and sometimes we hide under the flowers. Then, when the water spouts up out of the top of the castle we all fly away."

And just then, what should happen but that some water began to spurt, then and there, right out of the top of that big pile of stones. Up, up it went, in a spray, spreading out at the tops like an umbrella in a rain storm, and the drops fell with a splash into the basin below. Then Alice Wibblewobble cried out!

"Why, this isn't an enchanted castle at all!"

"No?" asked the yellow bird, putting its head on one side, so as to see better. "Why, we always call this our enchanted castle; always."

"No," answered Alice. "It is only a fountain in a stone pile in somebody's flower garden. I've seen one before, near our house."

"Well, it looks like an enchanted castle," said the bird, "and I'm sure it's just as pretty as one. Isn't it as good as your fairy prince?"

"Well," replied the little duck girl. "I suppose it is. But it's only water, such as I swim in."

"Oh, do you swim?" asked the bird. "Do please show me how. I've always wanted to learn."

So, though Alice was disappointed about the enchanted castle, she got in the little pond at the foot of the fountain, and swam around. The water spurted up in the air and fell all over her, but she didn't mind that. All the birds gathered around to watch, and even the flowers nodded their heads, they were so delighted.

"Oh, I'm sure we never can learn to swim," said the yellow bird, as Alice went around again. "It is much too difficult."

Then, all of a sudden, something happened. A boy and a girl came running down the gravel walk to the fountain. The little girl had yellow hair, just like a daffodil, and as soon as she saw Alice she cried out: "Oh, Norman! Come quick! Here is a lovely duck! I hope we can keep it!"

That frightened Alice very much, especially as the boy tried to grab her. So she sprang out of the water and ran and hid under some bushes where the children couldn't find her, and as soon as she could, she went back the way she had come, into the pond, and started to swim home.

And on the way a fox chased her and a big hawk tried to swoop down, and grab her, but she managed to get away. She was all tired out when she got home, and when Jimmie and Lulu asked her where she had been she told them all her adventures.

"Well," said Jimmie, when his sister had finished, "I think I would rather see that enchanted castle than the fairy prince again. Will you take us there some day, Alice?"

"Perhaps," she said, but before they made that trip something else happened, which you shall hear about to-morrow night if I find a green

popcorn ball with a pink ribbon on it. It's a story of a visit to Grandpa Wibblewobble's house.

STORY XII

A VISIT TO GRANDPA WIBBLEWOBBLE

Jimmie Wibblewobble was playing marbles with Bully, the frog, one day. They had just finished one game, and were beginning another when Alice Wibblewobble came alone. "Jimmie," she said, "mamma wants you."

"What does she want?" asked her brother.

"She wants you to come for a walk in the woods with us. Papa is going along. Come right away."

"Aw, I'd rather play with Bully," answered Jimmie, but just then his mamma called him, and he had to go. Bully hopped off, and Jimmie and Alice walked home together.

"Come, Lulu, are you all ready?" asked Mrs. Wibblewobble, as she saw her other daughter throwing stones in the pond, and making a great splash.

"Yes," was the reply, and then Jimmie said: "Oh, mamma, I don't want to go walking."

"I think you will want to when you know where we are going," said his papa.

"Where are we going?"

"To Grandpa Wibblewobble's."

"Oh, goody!" cried Lulu and Jimmie at once, for they always had a nice time at their grandfather's. So the ducks set off through the woods and over the fields, and every time they came to a bit of water they swam over it as fast as a cat can wash her face.

Pretty soon, after awhile, not very long, they came to the pen where Grandpa Wibblewobble lived with his daughter, Miss Weezy Wibblewobble, who kept house for him.

"Ha, I think grandpa has company," said Papa Wibblewobble, as they came close to the pen and heard talking. "Yes, he certainly has." And, sure enough, the old gentleman duck had. And whom do you suppose it was? My Uncle Wiggily Longears, the old gentleman rabbit!

"How is your rheumatism?" asked Mrs. Wibblewobble of Uncle Wiggily Longears, after they had sat down.

"Oh, it doesn't seem to get any better," he answered. "I have carried a piece of horse chestnut in one ear, and a bit of dried potato in the other for ever so long, but nothing seems to do me any good. I am going to have a new doctor soon if I don't get well. Oh my, yes, and some pepper hash on bread and butter also! Ha! Hum! Oh my! Ouch! and Jack and the Bean Stalk!" Uncle Wiggily called out that last because his rheumatism hurt so.

Well, Grandpa Wibblewobble gave each of the Wibblewobble children some nice sugared corn meal, flavored with sweet flag, peppermint and watercress, and a few snails to eat, and maybe they didn't like them!

"Now," said grandpa, "you children go out to play, while we old folks talk about the weather and rheumatism," for you see rheumatism was about all Uncle Wiggily cared to talk about.

Well, the little duck children had a fine time playing around grandpa's house, and now, in about a minute something is going to happen. They had wandered off a little way, and, just as they were resting under some burdock leaves, in the shade, they heard voices talking. And one voice said:

"Now I'll go up to the front door of Grandpa Wibblewobble's house and you go up to the back door. We'll both knock at the same time, and the ducks won't know which door to go to first. Then we'll jump in the windows and eat them all up—all up—up! There are some extra fine ducks there to-day."

Oh, maybe Jimmie and his sisters weren't frightened. They trembled so that the leaves shook as if the wind was blowing them, and when Jimmie got a little quiet he looked out, and what do you suppose he saw? Why two mean, wicked, sly old foxes, who were getting ready to go to grandpa's house and eat him up, and Mamma and Papa Wibblewobble up, and probably Uncle Wiggily Longears, too; who knows?

"Oh, isn't this awful?" asked Alice in a whisper. "I am going to faint! I know I am!"

"Silly!" said Jimmie to her. "Don't you dare faint! Here, smell of this," and he picked some spearmint, and held it under his sister's nose, which made her feel better.

"We must do something," said Lulu. "It will never do to have those bad foxes go to grandpa's house! How can we stop them?"

"Let me think," whispered Jimmie, quite bravely, and he put his head under his wing, so he could be quiet and think better. "Ah, I have it!" he cried out. "Come with me, girls!"

So they stepped softly from under the burdock leaves, those three duck children did, and ran to grandpa's house as fast as they could, leaving the bad foxes in the woods. Well, you can imagine how surprised all the folks were, even Uncle Wiggily, when they heard the alarming news which the children told.

"Oh, whatever shall we do?" cried Weezy Wibblewobble.

"I know what I'd do, if it wasn't for my rheumatism!" said Uncle Wiggily. "I'd bite those foxes, and jump on them, too, but I can't! Oh, if Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy were only here!"

"Never mind. I will save you," spoke Jimmie. "Come now, we must get a lot of stones and some boards. Hurry, for the foxes will soon be here."

So the ducks, with Uncle Wiggily helping them as much as he could, put a board over the front door, and one over the back door, just inside the house. Then they piled a lot of stones on the boards and fixed them with strings, so that when the cords were pulled the boards would fall down and the stones would also fall, with a clatter on the head of whoever was at the door.

Well, after all this was done, the ducks and Uncle Wiggily went and hid in the house. Then, in a little while, those bad foxes came sneaking along. And, sure enough, one went to the back door and the other to the front door.

They knocked at the same time, just as they had said they would, and Papa Wibblewobble opened one door and Grandpa Wibblewobble the other. Then just as soon as the doors were opened Jimmie, who had hold

of the strings that were fast to the boards, pulled them with his bill, and down clattered the stones, rattlety-bang-go-bung-ker-plunk, right on top of the heads of those two bad foxes! Oh, how scared they were!

"The house is falling! The house is falling! Run away!" cried one fox and they both ran as fast as they could, glad enough to escape, I tell you. Now, wasn't that a good trick Jimmie played on those bad animals?

I thought so, myself, and so did his grandpa and his papa and mamma, to say nothing of Uncle Wiggily Longears. And that's how the foxes didn't eat up the ducks, and to-morrow night, if the robin sings under my window as sweetly as he did yesterday morning, you shall hear about how Aunt Lettie came on a visit.

STORY XIII

A VISIT FROM AUNT LETTIE

One day it was so very pleasant out of doors that Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble didn't want to go to school. The sun was sparkling on the water in the duck pond, and Alice said, as she felt the wind blowing on her feathers:

"Oh, I just wish I could go see the fairy prince again!"

"Pooh! I don't," spoke Jimmie. "But I wish we could stay home from school. Bully, the frog, and I were going to get up a baseball nine. Let's go ask papa if we can stay home."

"Can't I play on your ball team?" asked Lulu, who could throw a stone almost as well as a boy.

"No," said Jimmie. "Girls never play on ball teams."

"Couldn't I even umpire?" went on his sister.

"No, Uncle Wiggily Longears is going to do that," replied Jimmie. "Billie and Johnnie Bushytail and Sammie Littletail are going to play on the team. But let's go ask papa if we can stay home. It's too nice to go to school."

So they went and asked Mr. Wibblewobble, who had remained at home from work that day, because, you see, he happened to swallow a shoe button by mistake for a grain of corn, and he had indigestion something awful; yes, really.

You know it was a tan shoe button, and if your eyesight isn't very good, why it does look like a grain of corn, especially if you're very hungry and in a hurry. So Mr. Wibblewobble wasn't feeling very well when Jimmie and Lulu came in to ask him if they could stay home from school, and he was the least bit cross, perhaps, because his indigestion was really very bad at that moment. So he answered them:

"No, indeed, you can't stay home. Go to school at once! Quack!"

Now when a duck says one quack, instead of a double quack-quack, you may know he is feeling very, very miserable, and you don't want to bother him any more than you can help.

Lulu and Jimmie knew this, and they hurried out of the pen to go to school. Then their papa felt sorry for them, because, you see, he did not really mean to be cross, only he knew it was best for them to learn all they could. So he said "Quack-quack," which meant he was feeling better, and he added: "When you come home, my dears, you may each have a penny. Run along now, like good ducks."

So, though Jimmie felt badly about not being able to get up a ball nine, he waddled along with his sisters, and pretty soon they were at the owl school, where they met Sammie and Susie Littletail and Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, and Sister Sallie and Bully, the frog. Yes, they were all there, and, what's more, they had their lessons, too, so they were not kept in.

They hurried home after school, Alice and Lulu and Jimmie, I mean, because this story is about them, you see; and they got their pennies from their papa, and each one bought some watercress snails, preserved in salted cornmeal; very fine they were, too, for ducks.

Just as the three Wibblewobble children were finishing the last of the snails, who should come hopping along but Bully, the frog. He hopped

into the water to cool himself off and then, when he had hopped out again, he asked:

"I say, Jimmie, are your folks expecting company?"

"I don't think so," answered Jimmie. "I saw mamma setting the table and she wasn't putting the clean cloth on. No, I guess we're not going to have company, or there'd be a clean cloth put on. Why do you ask?"

"Because, as I was coming through the woods just now I met a funny looking creature asking the way to your pen."

"Who was it?" inquired Lulu.

"Oh, it was a nice old lady. She had long hair and she carried a basket and she wore such a funny bonnet! Two sharp things stuck right out of the top of it. I offered to show her the way here, but she said I went in the water so often that she couldn't follow me, for she didn't want to get her feet wet. You must be going to have company."

"Maybe we are!" cried Alice. "Let's go ask mamma."

So they went, and asked their mother, but she said she did not know of any company coming, but, for fear some one might come along unexpectedly she did put the clean table cloth on, and she got out the napkins, and opened a jar of preserved sweet flag root.

"Come on," proposed Lulu, after a bit, "let's go through the woods. Bully, you show us where you met the queer lady, and maybe we'll see her."

So the four started off, Bully hopping along in front, and pretty soon, just as they got to the place where the weeping willow tree stands, what should they hear but a funny noise. It sounded like "Ma-a-a-a-a!" You know, just like a sheep cries.

"There she is!" exclaimed Bully. "That's just the way she talks. And there she is! Look! The nice old lady!"

The three Wibblewobble children looked, and what should they see but a big white goat. She was an old lady goat, and she was walking along with her basket on her arm, and the things sticking out of her bonnet were her horns. As soon as she saw the children she called:

"Oh, my dears, can you show me the way to Mrs. Wibblewobble's? I'm afraid I'm lost!"

"Why, Mrs. Wibblewobble is our mamma," answered Lulu, quickly.

"Oh, my dears! You don't mean it!" cried the goat. "Then you must be my little nieces and nephew I've heard so much about. But who is this little green boy? I've seen him before."

"Oh, he's the catcher on our base ball nine," said Jimmie. "He catches the balls in his mouth. But, who are you, if I may be so bold as to ask?"

"I'm your Aunt Lettie," replied the goat. "I've come to pay you a long visit. Oh, I'm so glad I found you, for I feared I would never get to your house! See, I have brought you some apple turnovers, and some gooseberry tarts. Now let's hurry home, but first kiss me."

So Aunt Lettie kissed them all, even Bully, the frog, and then she and the Wibblewobble children went to the ducks' pen, where she stayed several days.

And quite a number of things happened, too. In fact, one took place the very next day, as you shall hear to-morrow night, when I am going to tell you about Lulu and the pussy willows, provided a doggie with a yellow nose and pink ears doesn't scare me.

STORY XIV

LULU AND THE PUSSY WILLOWS

"What shall we do now?" asked Lulu the next morning after Aunt Lettie came, and the duck children had gone out to play, leaving their mamma and the old lady goat to do the dishes.

"Let's go see the fairy prince," suggested Alice.

"Oh, you're always thinking of that fairy prince," objected Jimmie. "I say let's go for a walk."

"All right," agreed Lulu. "I know where there are some nice pussy willows. We'll get some to take to our school teacher next Monday."

So they started off up the pond to the place where the pussy willows grew. They gathered quite a number, breaking off the stems in their strong yellow bills, and then, putting the willows under their wings, they started back home again. They didn't have to hurry because, you see, it was Saturday, and there wasn't any school. Oh, my no! Ducks don't have to go to school on Saturday any more than you do, even if they are only in the kindergarten class.

Now, if you please, pay close attention, for something is going to happen very shortly, if Uncle Wiggily Longears doesn't come along and bother me, and I don't believe he will. Well, Lulu and Alice and Jimmie got safely home with the pussy willows, and as they were putting them in water to keep until Monday, Aunt Lettie came into the room.

"What have you there, my dears?" she asked, wiggling her horns and looking over the tops of her glasses as easily as you can draw a picture of a horse. "What have you there, my dears?"

"They are pussy willows, Aunt Lettie," replied Lulu.

"Oh dearie me! oh Sacramento!" cried Aunt Lettie, who was quite excitable at times. "Why ever did you bring them here, little ones?"

"Why, we want them for teacher," explained Alice.

"I don't," declared Jimmie. "Boys never bring the teacher flowers; that is unless they don't want to be kept in when there's a ball game. But don't you like pussy willows, Aunt Lettie?"

"Oh, no indeed," she answered. "I don't like cats of any description."

"But these are only pussy willows," said Alice.

"Oh, they'll turn into cats quickly enough," remarked Aunt Lettie. "There was a family who once lived next to us, and they had kittens. Why it wasn't any time at all before those kittens had turned into cats, and land goodness, how they did howl nights and keep me awake! And I had lumbago that summer, too! Oh, yes, indeed, kittens are all very well, but when they turn into old cats they're not so nice."

"Oh, but Aunt Lettie, you don't understand," explained Jimmie, smiling the least bit. "You see these are only plant pussies. They can't ever become real cats you know."

"They grow, don't they?" asked the old lady goat, shaking her horns again, "Don't they grow?"

"Yes," admitted Lulu. "They certainly grow."

"Well, if they're pussies now they'll grow to be cats soon enough, you mark my words," went on Aunt Lettie quite sorrowfully. "That is unless they drown in that water," she added quickly.

"Why, no; pussy willows can't drown in water," said Lulu. "We put them there to keep them fresh. You don't need to worry about those pussy willows, dear Aunt Lettie."

But Aunt Lettie did worry. In fact she had to worry about something, anyhow, so I suppose it is just as well that she worried about the pussy willows. And, when they all went to bed that night, the last thing she said was:

"Now, you mark my words! Those pussies will be cats before you know it."

But Lulu and Alice and Jimmie did not think so. However you just wait and see what happened.

Along in the middle of the night, when it was all still and quiet, and when even the frogs had stopped croaking, and it wasn't time for the roosters to begin to crow; yes, when it was dark, and still and silent and not a sound was heard, suddenly what should happen but that right in the Wibblewobble house there came a loud: "Mew! Mew! Mew!"

"There!" exclaimed Aunt Lettie, jumping out of bed. "What did I tell you? Those pussy willows have turned into cats, and the house will be full of them! Oh, dear! Why did you bring them in here? It's dreadfully bad luck!"

Lulu and Jimmie and Alice jumped out of bed, too. So did Mr. and Mrs. Wibblewobble. All the while they kept hearing that: "Mew! Mew! Mew!"

"Whatever can it be?" asked Mamma Wibblewobble. "Maybe it's a burglar."

"Nonsense!" replied Mr. Wibblewobble, "burglars don't mew. I'll go look."

So he went to look, and what do you think he found? Why, right under a vase of the pussy willows, on a cushion, was a dear, sweet, little white kitten. Yes, sir, as true as I'm telling you! And so soon as Lulu saw it she cried: "It's mine! One of my pussy willows has turned into a kittie! Oh, how glad I am!"

And, honestly, the kittie was right under Lulu's vase of pussy willows, just as sure as that two and two make four.

"I told you so!" cried Aunt Lettie. "Now, maybe you'll believe me next time. The pussy willows turned into a kitten."

"Oh, but this kitten can't be from those willows," said Papa Wibblewobble. "This is a real pussy. It must have come in from out of doors. I guess I must have left a window open."

And the funny part of it was that he had left a window up, and it was a real kittie that had wandered in, straying away from its mamma. But Aunt Lettie was sure it had come from a pussy willow. Lulu didn't care, because she was allowed to keep the kittie for herself, and what do you think? Why that kittie joined Jimmie's baseball nine, and to-morrow night I'll tell you about a game of ball that was played. That is if the man in the moon doesn't tumble down and hurt his nose.

STORY XV

PLAYING A BALL GAME

One day Jimmie Wibblewobble was going over to where Bully, the frog, lived.

"Come on!" cried the little boy duck, to the frog. "Let's get up a ball game. We'll find Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, and Sammie Littletail, and have some fun. Have you seen Uncle Wiggily Longears? He will umpire for us, I know, and tell who's out, and when the balls go straight, and all that. Have you seen him?"

"I saw him limping along a while ago," answered Bully. "He can't have gone very far, for his rheumatism is bad again."

"Let's hurry up and catch him," suggested Jimmie. So they ran on through the woods as fast as they could and, sure enough, they soon saw the old gentleman rabbit.

"Will you come to our ball game?" asked Jimmie.

"Why, of course, to be sure," answered Uncle Wiggily. "But I can't play very well, you know, on account of—Oh my! Ouch! Oh dear! Um Um! Present arms! Ready! Aim! Fire! Oh! Oh! Oh!" That's the way he cried all of a sudden.

"What's the matter?" asked Jimmie.

"Matter? Why my rheumatism; that's what's the matter! It does seem to catch me at the wrong time. I'm afraid I won't be able to play ball to-day

after all, boys. I'm sorry, but—Oh dear! There it goes again!" and that poor, old gentleman rabbit had to lean on his crutch, because his legs hurt him so.

"Oh, we only want you to look on, and tell us when the game is going all right," said Jimmie very kindly. "You can have a seat in the shade, and you will decide who's out, and who makes a run, and which side wins."

"Well, I might manage that," replied Uncle Wiggily. "Come on, but please walk very slowly."

So they walked on very slowly, and pretty soon they met Johnnie and Billie Bushytail with Sister Sallie. And the little girl squirrel was singing:

"Hippity-hop to the barber shop
To buy a lolly-pop-lally.
One for me and one for thee
And one for Sister Sallie."

"Come on, let's play ball," called Jimmie to Johnnie and Billie. The Bushytail brothers said they would, and on they all went, through the woods and over the fields, and pretty soon, oh, maybe in about two quacks and a half, whom should they meet but Sammie and Susie Littletail. Sammie said he would play ball, and Susie said she would look on. Then along came Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble, and Lulu had her white kittie with her.

"My kittie ought to play, as long as I can't play, especially as she knew how to roll a ball," spoke Lulu. So Jimmie said the kittie could very nicely with her paws.

"But that's all the girls who are going to be on the team," said Jimmie very decidedly.

Well, they started to play, and they had an old wooden door knob for a ball. I just wish you could have seen them, honestly I do. It was as good as going to a show, where they charge five pins to get in. Bully, the frog, was the catcher, for all he had to do was to open his large mouth, and the ball would go right in. Uncle Wiggily was a sort of judge, or umpire. That is, he sat in the shade, on a pile of soft leaves, and told when it was right for one of the players to give up the bat, and let some one else have a chance.

Now whom do you suppose threw the ball? Why, Johnnie Bushytail. And Billie was on first base, while Jimmie Wibblewobble had the bat, which was a piece of hickory stick. He was to hit the ball and Sammie Littletail and the white kittie, whose name was Sadie, were to chase it.

Oh, what fun they had! Jimmie knocked the ball as hard as he could, and then he ran, and Sadie and Sammie tried to put him out, that is to tag him with the ball, for that's the way they played. Then it came Bully's turn to bat, while Johnnie Bushytail caught, and then you should have seen how cutely Sadie, the kittie, would roll the ball along to first base whenever any one hit it.

And as for Billie Bushytail, when it was his turn, he knocked a ball away over in the field, and Lulu ran after it, even if she wasn't supposed to play. She threw it back too, and then she went and sat down with Alice and Susie and Sister Sallie. Uncle Wiggily did fine at umpiring, and he was as kind and good as could be, so no one found fault with what he said, even when he had to rub his leg that had rheumatism in it.

But something dreadful happened. I've got to tell about it, or else it wouldn't be fair, and we must always be honest and fair in this world, no matter whether we want to or not. It was Jimmie's turn at the bat again. He hit the ball very hard.

Away it sailed, over the fence and across the field, and then, oh, don't breathe or wiggle for a few seconds now! then, if that ball didn't smash, bang, crash right into the window of Grandfather Goosey-Gander's house! Yes, sir, it broke the window all to flinders, and out rushed Grandfather Goosey-Gander! Oh, but he was angry! He quacked, and he squawked, and he called out:

"Who broke my window?"

"I—I did, please sir," answered Jimmie. "But I didn't mean to. It was an accident."

"Ha, hum! An accident, eh? Well, you'll have to pay for it," said Grandfather Goosey-Gander. "Yes, that's what you will!"

"Oh we'll all chip in and pay for it," said Bully, quickly. "That's what we always do in a ball game when a window is broken. I'll pay my share."

"Ha! Hum!" cried Grandfather Goosey-Gander, and then he sneezed, for he had run out without his cap on and he was bald headed.

So they all agreed to pay for the window, and even Sister Sallie said she would help. But they didn't have to. No, sir, as true as I'm telling you, if Aunt Lettie didn't happen along just then, and, when she heard what the matter was, she just took out her purse and said:

"I'll pay for the window which Jimmie broke. I am rich, and I'll never miss the money. Boys and girls must have some fun."

"Fine!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I'm the umpire and I say that's just fine."

Now, wasn't that kind of Aunt Lettie? Well, I guess so! Then the game went on, and Billie and Johnnie Bushytail won, but no more windows were broken. Now, if we don't get an April shower to-morrow, you shall

hear, in the next story, to-morrow night, about how the duck's pen caught fire, and who put it out.

STORY XVI

THE WIBBLEWOBBLE HOME ON FIRE

After the ball game, which I told you about last night, all the players, and those who had looked on, and Uncle Wiggily, the umpire, started for home. On the way they talked of how kind Aunt Lettie was.

"She's the kindest person I have ever known," said Uncle Wiggily, as he limped along on his crutch that Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy had gnawed out of a cornstalk for him. "She is very—Oh dear! Oh me! Oh my! Oh disproportionability! Wow! Ouch! My rheumatism again!" and it hurt him so he had to stand still and waggle his ears as hard as ever he could. Then he felt better, especially after he had rubbed a horse chestnut on his sore leg.

You see the rheumatism which was cured by a red fairy, as I told you about in the first book, came back because Uncle Wiggily got his feet wet going out one day without his umbrella.

Of course Papa and Mamma Wibblewobble were much surprised to hear about the ball game, and the broken window, but they didn't scold Jimmie very much, and pretty soon, oh, in a little while after supper, you know, it was bedtime for the duck children and they went to bed.

Well, it got darker and darker, and soon it was nice and quiet around the pond where the ducks lived. Only the frogs seemed to be awake, and they were croaking away in the water. And pretty soon Lulu and Alice

were dreaming and so was Jimmie, and the funny part of it is that they all dreamed different things.

Pretty soon it got even darker, and then up popped the silvery moon, and it wasn't quite so dark. But it was more quiet. Oh my, yes! It was so quiet that I believe if a feather had fallen off a duck's back it would have made a noise when it struck the ground. Oh, it was very quiet.

Then, all of a sudden Jimmie awakened. He sniffed and he snuffed, and he smelled smoke. So he got up and he called to Lulu and Alice in the next room:

"Say, don't you smell smoke?"

"Yes," said Alice, "I do."

"Maybe it's Grandfather Goosey-Gander smoking his pipe," suggested Lulu.

"No, he doesn't smoke as late as this," said Jimmie.

Then the smell of smoke got stronger, and, in about as long as it would take you to count one and a half, what should happen but that the whole duckhouse was suddenly lighted up. Then there came a crackling, roaring sound, and Papa and Mamma Wibblewobble jumped up.

"Oh, dear! It's burglars! I know it's burglars!" cried Mrs. Wibblewobble. "Quack real loud, Leander" (you see Mr. Wibblewobble's name was Leander). "Quack real loud, and call the police!"

So Mr. Leander Wibblewobble quacked as loudly as he could, and just then Aunt Lettie jumped out of bed.

"Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!" she cried, three times, just like that. "The house is on fire! The house is burning up! Run! Jump, everybody!"

And, sure enough, the ducks' house was on fire, and it wasn't a burglar at all; no sir! Whether the moon was so hot that it caused the fire, or whether it was sparks from grandfather's pipe, I can't say, but anyhow, the house was on fire, and it was burning fiercely.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" cried Aunt Lettie again. And Mamma Wibblewobble cried just the same, too. Then they all ran and jumped out of the second-story window, but it didn't hurt them, for they could fly a little bit, you know, and they came down like balloons. That is all but Aunt Lettie, and she was used to jumping, so she came down like a lot of dishes falling off the table.

Well, you should have seen that house burn! Oh, it was a dreadful sight. All the other ducks and the geese and the chickens gathered around. The rooster crowed the alarm. Box number twenty-one it was, but of course there were no engines to come and put out the fire.

"Oh, we must save the house!" shouted Papa Wibblewobble.

"Everybody bring water from the pond and throw it on the fire!" cried Aunt Lettie, and she ran down and filled her two horns, which she carried on her head. The horns were hollow and had the tops sawed off, so she could fill them quickly and pour out the water just as easily. She splashed some water on the fire, but it didn't do much good. Then Lulu and Alice and Jimmie, they filled their bills with water and threw it on the blaze, but that didn't do much good.

No, sad to tell, all the water the ducks and the geese and Aunt Lettie could carry, to say nothing of the rooster who couldn't bring much, because he stopped to crow every now and then—all this water didn't do a bit of good, and the house was burning faster and faster.

Then, what do you think happened? Why, all at once there came running up old Nero, the big, shaggy, yellow dog, who was so old and kind that he would never hurt any one. Yes, he ran right up and called out:

"Make way, if you please. I will put out that fire!"

So he ran down into the pond as fast as he could run and soaked himself in the water. Then he ran up close to the fire and shook himself hard, and the drops of water scattered from his shaggy sides all over the blaze, just like a rain storm. And the fire was partly out.

Then he ran down again and got all wet and shook himself, and scattered some more water over the fire. And that fire was pretty nearly out.

Then for the third time that dog, Nero, ran down into the water and got all soaking wet, and scattered the drops over the blaze, like two showers and a half. And then that fire was all completely out! Oh, wasn't he a good dog, though?

Well, the house wasn't burned so much after all, and the ducks could go back into it. And maybe they weren't thankful to Nero, but he only said:

"Ah, you should have watched me gnaw bones when I was a young dog. That was a sight worth seeing." But I think it was great for him to put out the fire, don't you? Now, to-morrow night's story, providing my automobile doesn't hit a balloon, will be about how the fairy prince was caught.

STORY XVII

HOW THE FAIRY PRINCE WAS CAUGHT

Aunt Lettie, the nice old lady goat, wanted Lulu and Alice and Jimmie to have a good time, so one day she fixed them up a basket of lunch to take off in the woods and eat. She made some jam tarts—oh, such lovely, flaky ones!—and there were cookies and bread and butter and I don't know what all. I just wish I had that basket of lunch now, don't you? But, of course, we wouldn't want to take it away from the duck children, would we?

So they started off, and as they passed by Nero, he opened one eye—only one, mind you, and looked at them. And he said: "I am feeling a little hungry, but I don't s'pose you have anything for me."

"Yes," said Lulu, "you may have a jam tart because you saved our house from burning up."

So they gave Nero one tart, and he gobbled it up as quickly as you can cross your "t" or dot your "i" when you're writing in school.

Pretty soon, well, not so very long, you know, the three duck children came to the woods. Oh, the woods were the nicest place you ever saw!

There was a little brook running in and out among the trees, and it sounded like music when it went over the stones. Well, they sat down on the grass, near a mossy old stump, and ate their lunch, until there wasn't even so much as a crumb of a jam tart left. They had just gotten through

when, all of a sudden, they heard a big noise. It was like some one stamping his feet down and breaking sticks.

The duck children were terribly frightened, for they thought maybe it was an elephant or a rhinoceros coming along, but Jimmie peeked through the bushes and whispered to his sisters:

"It's a big boy!"

"What's he doing?" asked Alice.

"I guess he's going fishing," said Lulu, "for he has a fish pole over his shoulder."

And, sure enough, that boy was going fishing! He walked on a little farther, stepping on sticks and breaking them, and then he sat down on the edge of the little brook and began to fish. Then the duck children weren't so much afraid, and they watched him.

Pretty soon the boy pulled up his line with a jerk, but there wasn't anything on it. Then he said:

"Oh, dear! That was a big fish, but he got away."

"I'm glad it got away," whispered Alice, "for I don't like to see the poor fish caught."

Then, in about two quacks and a waddle, the boy pulled up his pole again, and this time he didn't have anything on the hook, either. So he said again:

"Oh, dear me, and an angle worm! That's two big fish that have gotten loose."

Then he threw in his line again, and the next time when he pulled it up something came with it. Something wiggily, and black and yellow and red-spotted with wrinkly legs and a long snaky neck and head.

"Ker-thump!" it landed on the bank and the boy ran up to it. "Why, I've caught a mud turtle!" he cried.

"I am not!" the mud turtle called out, only he couldn't speak very plainly, for the hook was in his mouth. "I'm a fairy prince, and you had no right to catch me," he said.

Now, of course, the boy couldn't hear this, for he didn't understand the language used by the fairy prince. But Alice heard him, and so did Lulu and Jimmie.

"Oh, dear!" cried Alice. "That bad boy has caught the fairy prince! Let's run out and make him let the prince go!"

"Oh, no!" answered Lulu, "the boy might catch us then."

"I know what let's do," whispered Jimmie. "We'll get in the bushes right behind that boy, and quack and squawk as loud as we can: That will scare him and make him run away. I don't believe the mud turtle is fairy prince, but I don't want to see him hurt. Come on, girls. Now when I say: 'ready,' quack real loud."

So the three duck children went softly up to a bush right behind where that fisherman—I mean fisherboy—was sitting.

All this while the fairy prince was talking to the boy, and asking to be let go, for the hook hurt him. The boy finally did take the hook out, not hurting the mud-turtle any more than he could help, for he was not a bad boy.

Then, in an instant, or maybe in an instant and a half, Jimmie cried, "Ready!" and he and his sisters quacked as loudly as possible, or even louder. The boy was just going to put the mud turtle into the basket, but when he heard the quacking, coming right out of the bushes behind him, he was so frightened that he dropped the fairy prince on the ground.

And the fairy prince crawled off as fast as he could, let me tell you. Then the boy saw that it was the duck children who had frightened him, and he laughed; but they didn't care, not a bit.

Then the boy said: "Oh, I guess there is no good fishing here. I'm going to try a new place," so he walked away.

Then Alice went right up to the mud turtle and said: "O fairy prince, art thou much hurt?"

"I am hurt considerable," said the mud turtle. "I am hurt in two ways. My mouth hurts where the hook went in, and my feelings are hurt because the boy didn't believe I was a fairy prince."

"Well, if you are a fairy prince," asked Jimmie, "why didn't you turn him into an elephant or a lion and scare him, or why didn't you change him into a bug or a mosquito, so he could fly away? Why didn't you do that, eh?"

"There are several reasons," replied the mud turtle.

"Oh, wilt thou tell them to us?" asked Alice, romantically.

"Not now," replied the fairy prince, "but I will later. Return here to-morrow and I will tell you," and he stretched first one wrinkly leg, and then the other, and went to sleep.

"We will return," said Alice, and then the duck children hurried home, and to-morrow night you shall hear about a magic trick and why the

fairy prince didn't turn that boy into an elephant or a lion. That is, if the Thanksgiving turkey doesn't go to a football game.

STORY XVIII

THE FAIRY PRINCE DOES A MAGIC TRICK

One day, after they had been out roller skating, Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble suddenly remembered that it was time they went back to the woods to meet the fairy prince, who was to tell them why he didn't turn that fisher-boy into a lion or an elephant. So they took off their skates and hurried to the place, and by and by, after awhile, not so very long, they got there. Then they stopped and looked around.

"Hu!" exclaimed Jimmie. "He isn't here. I *thought* he was fooling us."

"Hush!" begged Alice. "He may be only hiding to test us, to see if we really believe in him. He may appear any moment in a big balloon or on the back of a great bird."

"Somebody's coming now," said Lulu, suddenly, for she heard a rustling in the bushes. They all turned around, and whom do you think they saw coming right out of the woods? Why, Uncle Wiggily Longears! The old gentleman rabbit was limping along, making his nose go up and down and sideways at the same time, the way you have seen all the bunnies do, you know.

"Ha! Ha!" he exclaimed. "What have we here? Why, I do declare! If it isn't Jimmie Wibblewobble and his sisters! What are you doing here, little ones?"

"We came here to meet the fairy prince," replied Jimmie. "He was going to tell us about why he didn't change a boy into an elephant. But he isn't here."

"Who—the fairy prince, the boy or the elephant?" asked Uncle Wiggily, gently rubbing a horse chestnut on his left hind leg, that had the worst rheumatism in it.

"Neither one," said Alice, "but the fairy prince is sure to come."

"Stuff and nonsense. Nonsense and stuff, also snuff and red pepper!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "Fairy prince indeed! There's no such thing!"

"Oh, yes, there is!" said Alice. "Pray do not speak so loudly. He might hear you."

"Thank you, my dear, for trusting in me!" exclaimed a voice suddenly, and honestly, you may not believe me, but if there wasn't that mud turtle! Yes, sir, as true as I'm telling you, he appeared right from behind a bush!

"Thank you, my dear, for believing me," said the fairy prince to Alice again. "As for this—ahem!—this person!" and the mud turtle looked very severely at Uncle Wiggily, very severely indeed, "as for this person, I will soon show him! Oh, my, yes! and a tortoiseshell comb in addition," he said; and then the turtle stuck out its long neck, straight at the old rabbit, until Uncle Wiggily thought it was a snake.

"Fairy prince, we salute thee!" exclaimed Alice, making a low bow.

"Good, very good," remarked the mud turtle. "I believe I promised you I would tell you why I did not change the boy, who caught me, into something strange, say an elephant or a lion."

"Yes," replied Jimmie, "you did promise us. Go ahead, please."

"That's not the way to talk to a fairy prince," objected Alice. "You should speak more politely."

"Never mind him, he doesn't know any better," went on the mud turtle. "I will now give you my reasons. In the first place I did not want to scare that boy after the way you frightened him. He had been punished enough, I thought. Besides, if I had turned him into a lion or an elephant he would have run through the woods, scaring every one he met, and that would not have been right. And the reason I didn't change him into a bug or a mosquito was because he might fly away, and then, when the magic spell had passed off, and he was changed back into a boy again, the transformation might have happened in the air, and he would fall right down on somebody's head, and that would never do, never, never, not in a year and a half. So I concluded not to do anything to him."

"I don't believe you could have changed him into anything at all," said Uncle Wiggily, quite boldly. "I don't even believe you are a fairy prince."

"There it goes again!" cried the mud turtle, and he wept big tears that made a little puddle of water. "Very few persons do believe in me. But I assure you I am a fairy prince," he added, "and, what's more, all I would have had to say to that boy was 'Oskaluluhinniumhaddy,' and he would have been turned into anything I liked. But I see you still do not believe me—that is, all but Alice. So I will just do a magic trick for you. Return here in an hour, and in this very spot you shall find a round stone. Take a rock and break open the stone and you will see what happens."

So the Wibblewobble children and Uncle Wiggily went away, wondering what was going to happen. They came back in an hour, and, sure enough, right where the mud turtle had been standing was a large, round stone.

"Wonderful!" cried Alice.

"Let's see what's inside," suggested Jimmie.

So he and Uncle Wiggily took up a rock, and hit that stone once, and they hit it twice, and they hit it three times, and, at the third blow, if that stone didn't break open, and out stepped the mud turtle fairy prince! He was right inside that stone! Now, wasn't that a magic trick? I think so, anyhow.

"Oh, tell us how you did it!" begged Lulu.

"It was very simple, very simple," said the turtle, as he flicked a bit of mud off his nose. "You see, I just rolled myself up in some soft clay, and then made it round like a stone. Then I stayed in the sun until it was baked as hard as a rock, and then I rolled along here to wait for you. Very simple, indeed. But, now, do you believe I am a fairy prince?" And they all declared they did, even Uncle Wiggily, and Alice said three times: "We salute thee, fairy prince." Oh, it was as good as a play!

Well, now, let's see about to-morrow night. How about a story of the rat who took the eggs? Do you think you would like that? Very well, then, you shall hear it, providing my golden slipper doesn't fall off.

STORY XIX

THE RATS WHO TOOK THE EGGS

Nothing had happened at the Wibblewobble house in several days, and Jimmie and Lulu and Alice were beginning to feel that it was about time they went off on another picnic, or else tried to find the fairy prince again. But, one day, just as Jimmie was looking for his baseball and his catching glove, his mamma came out of the pantry, where she had gone to get some dishes to set the table.

"Did any of you children take my eggs?" she asked, and she looked very severely at them.

"What? Are the eggs gone?" asked Aunt Lettie, the old lady goat.

"Yes," said Mamma Wibblewobble, "there were just thirteen eggs, and now there are only ten. Three have been taken, and I hope Lulu and Alice and Jimmie didn't touch them."

"Oh, no indeed, mamma," spoke Alice very quickly, as she finished tying a sky-blue-pink ribbon around her neck. "I never touched them."

"Neither did I," added Lulu.

"Nor me," said Jimmie. "I don't like eggs anyhow."

"I was saving them to hatch more little ducklings out of," went on Mamma Wibblewobble, in sorrowful tones. "Now I shall have to wait. Oh, it's such a disappointment to me!"

"Maybe they fell off the shelf," suggested Jimmie.

"No," replied his mother. "If they had fallen from the shelf out of the basket, where I had them, the eggs would have broken, and made a mark on the floor," and, of course, you know they would, for when an egg breaks on the floor it makes a splish and a splash and a big yellow and white spot that you can't help but see; now, doesn't it? So Mamma Wibblewobble knew the eggs couldn't have fallen.

"Well," remarked Aunt Lettie, "it's very strange. Perhaps they have been stolen. You should notify the police."

"Or tell Mr. Cock A. Doodle, the rooster," added Jimmie. "He would crow over it; and if we offered a reward, maybe we would get the eggs back."

"Well, I'm glad you children didn't take them, at all events," said their mother. "Run along and play now. Aunt Lettie has made some molasses cookies, with corn meal and raisins on top, and you may have some of them."

So Lulu and Alice and Jimmie went out to play, but all the while they were thinking of the missing eggs. It was very strange. Their mamma and Aunt Lettie hunted all over the duck pen for them, but the eggs couldn't be found, any more than you can find a penny after you drop it down a crack in the board walk.

Well, when Papa Wibblewobble came home, he was told about the three missing eggs. He was much surprised, but he said at once:

"Why, a burglar has taken them; that's what! I remember now I heard a suspicious noise last night. It was some one sneezing. That was the burglar taking the eggs. I thought of getting up and going down to catch him, but I was too sleepy, so I stayed in bed."

"No, it wasn't a burglar who sneezed," said Aunt Lettie. "It was I. I left my window open, and I caught a little cold."

"Then who did sneeze and take the eggs?" asked Papa Wibblewobble.

But no one could tell him, and it was more mysterious and wonderful than ever, yes indeed. Not a trace of those eggs could be found, and Mamma Wibblewobble felt terribly.

Well, that night Jimmie thought of a plan. He decided he would catch the bad burglar, or whoever it was that had taken the eggs, for the little boy duck thought if they took three eggs they would come back for more.

"I'm going to hide in the pantry to-night," he said to Lulu and Alice, "and when the burglar comes I'm going to grab him."

"Won't you be afraid?" asked Alice, shivering.

"Afraid? Humph! I guess not," replied her brother.

So that night, after every one had gone to bed, and it was all still and quiet in the house, and Aunt Lettie was snoring the least little bit, Jimmie crawled softly out of bed. Oh, so softly, and went and hid in the pantry.

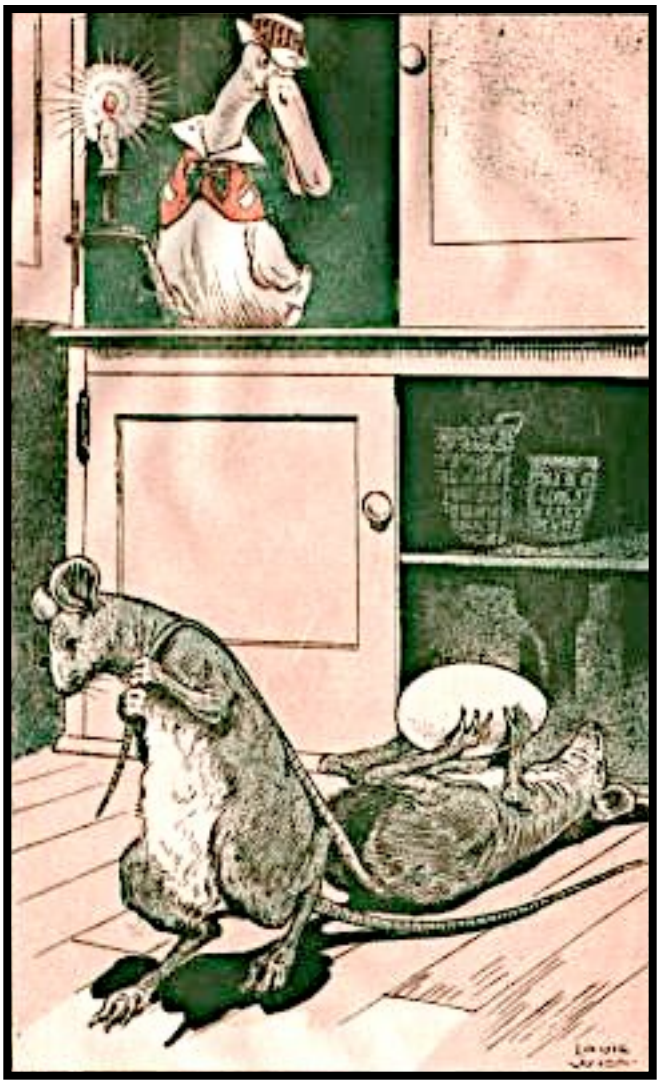
It was dark, so he took a candle and was all ready to light it whenever he heard a sound. Well, he had to wait quite some time, and it was getting pretty lonesome, and he was beginning to feel sleepy when, all of a sudden, he heard a noise! Then he heard another noise, and then a scratching and a squeaking. Then he lighted the candle as quickly as he could, and what do you suppose he saw?

Why, two great big rats, no relation to good, kind Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat, oh, not at all, but two other bad rats!

Well, as true as I'm telling you, if one rat didn't climb up on the shelf, where the duck eggs were in the basket, and take one up in his paws; and then what do you suppose he did? Why, he went to the edge of the shelf and dropped the egg to the rat on the floor below.

Then the rat on the floor caught it and lay down on his back, and hugged the egg in his four paws, and the rat on the shelf ran down and got hold of the tail of the rat that had the egg and began pulling him along the floor, just as if he were a little wagon or sled with an egg on it. All this Jimmie saw, and he cried out:

"Oh, you bad rats, you, to steal my mamma's eggs!"



Well, you should have seen how frightened those rats were at that! One dropped the egg out of his paws and ran away, and the other followed. Oh, but they were frightened, though! and wasn't Jimmie brave to hide in the pantry and discover them? So that's how the first three eggs were taken, but no more were, for Papa Wibblewobble stopped up the rat hole.

And that's the end of this story. The one to-morrow night will be about how Jimmie tried to stand on his head, that is, if the pussy cat doesn't go to sleep in the milk bottle.

STORY XX

HOW JIMMIE STOOD ON HIS HEAD

Jimmie Wibblewobble was quite a hero after he had found out about the rats taking the eggs, and every time he walked in the chicken yard the old rooster would crow and say:

"There goes Jimmie, the boy who scared the rats."

But do you s'pose Jimmie was proud? Not a bit of it. He was just as nice as ever, and Lulu and Alice thought a lot of him, let me tell you.

Well, one day, Bully, the frog, came over to play with Jimmie. They tossed a baseball around, Bully catching it in his mouth. All of a sudden the frog boy cried out:

"Oh, my, I'm so warm, I think I'll jump in the pond and cool off." So he jumped into the pond just as easily as butter melts on a hot stove, and when he came up he felt better. Then he said to Jimmie:

"Why don't you dive down under the water the way I do? It's lots of fun."

"I would," answered Jimmie, "only I can't stay under water as you do. I have to float on top. I can put my head under, to dig in the mud for snails and sweet, spicy weeds, but I can't get my whole body under."

"I know how you could do it," went on Bully.

"How?" asked Jimmie, and he wobbled his tail so fast you could hardly see it move.

"Tie a stone around your neck," went on Bully. That will make you sink under water, and you can then dive as good as I can. Come on, we'll have some fun."

"Oh, don't you do it, Jimmie!" cried Lulu, who came along just then with Alice. "Maybe you can't get the stone loose, and you'll be drowned!"

"Oh, I guess not," answered Jimmie. "I can stay under water a long time. I want to see how it feels to dive in—ker plunk!—like a frog."

"I'm going to tell mamma," cried Alice.

"Tattle-tale! Tattle-tale!" called Jimmie. "I never tell on you!"

"Well, then, I won't tell," said Alice, "but Lulu and I will stay close by, so if you can't get the stone off we can help you."

"Well, that's kind of you," spoke her brother, "but I'll be all right. You will see me stand on my head, just like Bully does, and dive under the water."

So he got a stone and a piece of long grass for a string, and Bully tied the stone around Jimmie's neck. Now, this was a very risky thing to do, but, you see, Jimmie didn't know any better. Neither did Bully. But you just wait and see what happens. I'm coming to it very shortly now.

Pretty soon the stone was tied on good and tight, and then Jimmie and Bully stood on the edge of the pond.

"Are you all ready?" asked Bully.

"Yep," replied Jimmie, and he stretched out his neck, for it felt funny to have a stone tied around it. Oh, how foolish some ducks are; now, aren't they, honestly?

"All ready," went on Bully. "One for the money, two for a show, three to make ready and FOUR to go!" and he yelled the "FOUR" real loudly.

Then they jumped in, Jimmie and Bully, ker-splash, ker-splosh, ker-splish, ker-thump! Oh what a lot of water they scattered about, wetting Lulu and Alice, but the girl ducks didn't mind it. Of course, Bully went right to the bottom, and so did Jimmie, too. His head went right down in the mud, the way Lulu's did that terrible day I told you about once. And poor Jimmie's yellow feet were right up in the air, and that's where a duck's feet ought never to be. Oh my, no! and some shingle nails besides.

Well, Jimmie tried to swim along under water, as he saw Bully doing, but he couldn't. No, sir, not the least bit. You see the stone was too heavy, and it held him down. Besides, his feet were out of the water, and as a duck has to have his feet in water to swim with, of course, Jimmie couldn't move along at all.

There he was, held down under water, and all the while his breath was getting shorter and shorter, and he kept feeling worse and worse, and he wished he had taken Lulu's advice and not tried to stand on his head and dive.

Well, naturally, when Jimmie didn't come up in some time, Lulu and Alice got worried. Bully popped up, after swimming across the pond under water and out of sight, and they asked him what had become of Jimmie.

"I'll go look," he said, and when he dived down, and came back, he was pale green instead of dark green as he usually was. You see he turned pale green because he was so frightened.

"Oh, dear!" cried Bully. "Jimmie is held fast down there by the stone on his neck, and can't get up."

"Can't you bite the stone loose?" asked Alice. Then Bully tried, but he couldn't, and Lulu and Alice tried, but they couldn't. And there wasn't any one else around to help, and it began to look pretty bad for poor Jimmie.

And then, just as he surely thought he would never see his papa, and mamma, and sisters, and Aunt Lettie again, who should come walking along the bottom of the pond but the mud turtle fairy prince. He saw right away what the matter was, and it didn't take him a second, with his sharp jaws, to bite through the grass that held, the stone around Jimmie's neck, and up popped the little boy duck!

His life had been saved just in time, let me tell you! And oh, how thankful Alice and Lulu were, to say nothing of Jimmie; and how they thanked the fairy prince.

"Maybe you will believe that I am a fairy now," said the mud turtle to Jimmie, and Jimmie said he would. He also said he would never stand on his head again, with a stone tied around his neck, and I'm glad to say he never did. Now, in case I should see a sky-blue-pink-green rose in blossom to-morrow I'll tell you a story about Lulu, and how Aunt Lettie did her a great favor.

STORY XXI

LULU AND AUNT LETTIE

Lulu Wibblewobble was walking in the deep, dark woods, and, what is more, she was all alone. Yes, and she wasn't afraid. You see, Jimmie had gone off with the boys in the lots back of the duck pond to play ball, and Alice had gone shopping with her mamma. Lulu could have gone, too, only felt she would rather go walking in the woods, so she went.

At first it was very pleasant with the birds singing in the trees, and the wind blowing through the leaves, and making music, and Lulu liked it very much. She found some fine eel grass in a little brook, and she was eating the green stems, and thinking how nice it was, when all at once she heard a funny noise. It was just like when a great, big door swings on rusty hinges.

Lulu stopped eating eel grass at once, and she called right out loud:

"My goodness! What's that?"

Then it was all still, and quiet; as quiet, you know, as when a little mouse walks along, and doesn't want any one to hear him, going after the crackers and cheese, and maybe the jam tarts, too; who knows? Well, it was just as still and quiet as it could be, when all of a sudden the noise came again.

"Oh, dear!" cried Lulu. "I believe I'm going to be frightened. I wish Jimmie was here!"

But Jimmie, the brave boy duck, was a long way off, playing ball with Bully, the frog, and his other friends, though he would have come at once to help his sister if he had known what a dreadful thing was almost going to happen to her.

Well, as I said, the noise sounded again, and then, when Lulu looked right at a tree, what should she see but something big and bushy, waving in the wind.

"Oh, maybe it's Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, and perhaps Sister Sallie is with them!" she said, aloud, and she didn't feel quite so frightened. Then that terrible noise came again, and the bushy thing got bigger, and Lulu saw that it was the tail of a great, big black dog. Oh, such a big black dog as it was! And he was growling, and that's what made the sound like a big door creaking on big, rusty hinges.

The dog came out from behind the tree, and he stared right in the face of Lulu, as bold as bold could be.

"Who are you?" growled the dog.

"If—if you please, kind sir, I'm Lulu," she answered.

"Bur-r-r-r!" growled the dog. "I'm not a kind Sir at all. I'm a bad dog! Bur-r-r-r! Bur-r-r-r! What's your last name? Bur-r-r-r!"

"My last name is Wibblewobble, Bad Dog," she replied.

"Bur-r-r-r! What are you calling me names for?" he asked, and he showed his teeth something frightful, yes, indeed! Now cuddle up close to me if you want to, and you won't be a bit afraid, because, in a few minutes Lulu is going to be saved in a wonderful way. Just you wait and see.

"Why do you call me names?" asked the dog again.

"I—I—If you please," said Lulu, "I thought you said your name was Bad Dog, sir."

"Bur-r-r-r!" cried the dog. "I didn't at all. No matter what my name is. I am a bad dog, however, and I'm proud of it!" Oh, wasn't he the bold, ugly dog, though? Then he looked at Lulu some more, and growled even louder, and he asked her:

"What are you, a chicken or a turkey?"

"Neither," replied Lulu, "I'm a duck, if you please."

"Ha!" exclaimed the bad dog. "A duck! The very idea! Of all things I love ducks! I just dote on 'em! I love 'em just like you love jam tarts, I expect. But why aren't you larger, Lulu? I like big ducks."

"Oh!" cried the little duck girl, "are you going to eat me up?"

"Yes," replied the dog, "I am."

"Then," went on Lulu, very bravely, for she was trying to think of a way to get out of the deep, dark woods, "if you will wait a year or two, I will be larger."

"No," said the dog. "I can't wait. I'm in a hurry. I must have you now."

Then he growled some more, and rushed right at Lulu, and I suppose he would have eaten her up, feathers and all, only for what happened.

Now, what do you suppose prevented him? Why, just as he was about to grab the little duck girl there was a crashing and a smashing in the bushes and who should appear but dear Aunt Lettie, the old lady goat! As soon as she laid eyes on that dog she knew what he was going to do, and without speaking a word, she rushed right at him and lowered her horns.

Now, it's a good thing for that dog that the sharp ends of Aunt Lettie's horns had been sawed off. So, you see, when she stuck them in that dog's ribs, they only tickled him and he had to laugh, instead of sticking right through him. Oh, how hard he laughed! But he didn't want to, not a bit.

Then Aunt Lettie just lowered her head, and then she raised it up, and over her back that bad dog went, right up in the air, and he was tossed in some briars and brambles that scratched him well.

But he wasn't satisfied yet, and he rushed back at Lulu, but Aunt Lettie tickled him in the ribs again, and he laughed: "Ha! Ho!" though he didn't want to at all, and over into the briars and brambles he was tossed once more.

Then he had had enough, and he ran off, howling instead of laughing, and that's the way it was that Aunt Lettie saved Lulu. You see the old lady goat happened to be walking in the woods, when she heard the dog growl and she ran up just in time. Then she went home with Lulu, and Jimmie said if he ever saw that dog he would throw a stone at him, and I wouldn't blame him, would you?

Now to-morrow night I think the story is going to be about how Alice cut her foot, and what happened after it. But I can't tell it unless I happen to see a grasshopper standing on his head and eating jam tarts.

STORY XXII

HOW ALICE CUT HER FOOT

Did you ever go barefooted in the summer time? I suppose you have, and I don't blame you a bit, especially on hot days, or when you are at Asbury Park or Ocean Grove. Now, to go barefooted, you know, you have to take off your shoes and stockings, and that's quite a bother at times.

Well, Alice Wibblewobble didn't have to do this when she wanted to go barefooted, for, you know, she never wore shoes and stockings in summer. You see it would be too much trouble to take them off every time she went in swimming with Lulu and Jimmie, so that's why it was arranged that she never had to wear any.

Now it happened one day, oh, I guess it must have been about a week and a minute after Lulu had been frightened by that big dog, that Alice was going to the store for her mother. The store was kept by Mr. Drake, who had a little round door knob on the top of his head, so his hat wouldn't blow off in windy weather.

"Bring me a pound of butter and some cornmeal, Alice," her mother had said to her, "and be sure the cornmeal is fresh. I am going to fry some for your father's supper."

So Alice said she would be sure about it, and she started off.

"Want me to come, Alice?" asked Lulu.

"No, dear," replied her sister. "I think it is too hot for you to-day. I'll soon be back again."

"Better take Jimmie," went on Lulu. "You may meet the bad dog or an ugly fox."

"No," spoke Alice again, "I think I'll go alone. Besides, Jimmie is off with Sammie Littletail, playing leapfrog. I'll go alone."

So off she went. Now I'm going to tell you why she wanted to go alone, but don't whisper it to any one. You see, Alice thought maybe she might meet the fairy prince, for she still hoped that some day he would change into a king with a golden diamond crown on his head.

But, as she walked on toward Mr. Drake's store she saw nothing of the fairy prince, though she kept a sharp lookout. Well, she got the pound of butter and the cornmeal, and to make sure it was fresh she ate a little, for that's the surest way to tell. Then she started for home, with the butter under one wing and the cornmeal under the other.

Well, all of a sudden, just as she got past the weeping willow tree, if she didn't step on a sharp stone and cut her foot, because, you see, she had no shoes on, and the stone was very, very sharp, almost as sharp as an exclamation point; yes, indeed! There, I had the printer put one in (!) so you could see how very sharp it is. Always be careful of exclamation points, children.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried Alice, as she felt the sharp stone go in her foot, and she had to sink down to the ground, it hurt her so. Then the cornmeal fell from under her wing and the bag burst and it spilled all over. Then the butter fell from under the other wing, but that didn't get hurt any. It only got some dents in it, and you know that doesn't matter, for butter.

"Oh, dear! Whatever shall I do?" cried Alice again. "I—I can't walk on my sore foot, and I can't carry the cornmeal and the butter! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! My foot's bleeding, too!" and, sure enough it was. Poor Alice! How sorry I feel for her.

"Ah, if only the fairy prince would appear now," she went on. "He would cause a golden chariot to take me home!"

You see, Alice hadn't gotten over being romantic, even if she had cut her foot. Oh, my, no, and a diamond earring besides!

Well, as true as I'm telling you, no sooner had she made that wish about the fairy prince than a voice called out:

"Who is crying? Does any one need help?"

"Yes," replied Alice, "I do. I've cut my foot, and I've dented the butter in several places, but that doesn't matter much, and I've spilled the cornmeal."

"Oh, what a lot of troubles for one poor little duck girl!" cried the voice again. "Perhaps, I can help you," and who should come along but Uncle Wiggily Longears, the nice old gentleman rabbit. "Let us see what's the trouble," he went on, and he put his strongest spectacles over his nose and he looked at the cut in Alice's foot. Then he cried:

"Oh, I should say that was a cut! Oh, my, yes! No doubt about it whatever! But there, don't cry," he added, for he saw some tears running down Alice's yellow bill. "I'll fix it for you."

So he got some nice, soft leaves, and he tied them on her sore foot with some stout grass. Then she felt better, but she couldn't walk, and she didn't know how she was ever going to get home. So she asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Why, the easiest thing in the world!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "All I have to do is to say a little verse, and I'll think of a way." So he said this little verse:

"Wiggily, waggily, woggily wome,
How shall I get Alice home?
She has hurt herself quite much
And she'll have to use my crutch."

Of course, Uncle Wiggily knew that wasn't a very good verse, but it was the best he could do.

"You shall use my cornstalk crutch, that Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy made for me," he went on. "It will be just the thing."

"Won't you need it?" asked Alice, very politely.

"No," said Uncle Wiggily. "My rheumatism is much better to-day. You may have it," and he fitted it under Alice's wing, and she could walk pretty well, not having to use her sore foot.

Then that kind old rabbit scraped up all the cornmeal, and he put some in his big left ear and some in his big right ear, because the bag was broken, and he carried the dented butter, which wasn't hurt the least mite.

Then they started for the duck pen and they reached it safely, Alice limping along as well as she could. And Uncle Wiggily told Mamma Wibblewobble about the accident, after he had emptied his left ear and his right ear of the cornmeal and had handed over the dented butter. Dr. Possum was called in to put some salve on Alice's foot, and she was soon better.

Now that's all to-night, but, if the moving man doesn't take my typewriter away, I shall tell you to-morrow night about Jimmie in a tall tree.

STORY XXIII

JIMMIE IN A TALL TREE

It had rained in the morning, and of course the grounds were too slippery and wet to play ball. That is, they were for Sammie Littletail and Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, but naturally Jimmie Wibblewobble, the boy duck, and Bully, the boy frog, would not have minded the wet the least bit. But there wasn't any ball game, and so Jimmie was playing all alone in the woods back of his house, and wishing it hadn't rained.

"Oh! I wish some of the boys would come over," he said. "We could do something, even if it is wet. I'm lonesome."

Just then he heard a voice singing in the woods, and he heard the branches of the trees moving about, and bits of bark falling off. And this is the song he heard: you have to sing it quite slowly to get the full effect:

"Oh! it is such fun if you see the sun
When the rain has gone away.
If you'll come with me you may climb a tree,
And in the top we'll play.
"Oh! the winds may blow and the cows may crow,
But what care we for that?
As you scamper high, near the bright, blue sky,

Look out, or you'll lose your hat."

And with that who should come scampering out of a tree but Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrel brothers. No, Sister Sallie wasn't with them this time, having stayed at home to wheel her corncob doll in the carriage her brothers had made for her.

"Hello!" cried Billie and Johnnie. "Hello, Jimmie!"

"Aw, why didn't you chaps come over to play ball?" asked the little boy duck.

"Oh! it was too wet," replied Johnnie. "But say, Jimmie, did you hear us singing?"

"Sure," answered Jimmie. "But say; cows don't crow!"

"I know it," replied Johnnie. "Billie made up that verse, and I made the first one. He said he had to have something like that in it or it wouldn't be right. But no matter. Did you like it?"

"Yes, pretty well."

"Shall we sing it again?" asked Johnnie.

"No, don't!" begged his brother. "He's been singing it all the morning, and I'm getting tired of it, even if I did make up one verse," he explained. "But say, Jimmie, don't you wish you could climb a tall tree, like this?" and before you could say Salimagundy or maybe incomprehensibility or even disproportionability, why Billie had run to the top of the tree and down again. "Don't you wish you could?" he asked again.

"Yes," answered Jimmie, looking up, "I wish I could climb a tree, but I guess ducks weren't made for that. I once tried to fly, and I didn't

succeed very well. I'll stay on the ground, I think. Come on, let's have a catch. I've got a ball."

"No," spoke Johnnie, "I have an idea. Billie, why can't you and I teach Jimmie to climb a tree? If we pick out one with branches close together I'm sure he could get up it. We can help him, and he can take hold of some limbs in his bill, like a parrot takes hold of the wires in his cage."

"Fine!" cried Billie. "Will you do it, Jimmie?"

"Sure," answered the little boy duck, but he didn't know what was going to happen, or, maybe, he wouldn't have tried to climb up. Well, the squirrels selected quite a tall tree, but rather an easy one, and Jimmie managed to scramble up to the first low limbs, with Billie and Johnnie boosting him.

After that it wasn't quite so hard, and he was able to get up quite a distance, pulling himself with his yellow bill. He was not very graceful, and I'm sure if you ever saw a duck climb a tree you would agree with me, but finally, after a great deal of hard work, Jimmie was right on the top branch where the two squirrels sat blinking their eyes.

"How do you like it?" asked Johnnie.

"Fine!" cried Jimmie. "Quack! Quack! Quack!" Now when a duck says "quack" three times, you may know he is very much pleased indeed. Oh, what a fine view Jimmie had, but he didn't dare frisk around as Billie and Johnnie did, for he was a trifle dizzy. Then, after he had been up there some time, he thought he had better go down, for the wind was blowing the treetop, and he wasn't used to it. So, after Billie and Johnnie had sung their song again, Jimmie started for the ground.

Well, you know how it is yourself, if you have ever climbed a tree. It's easy to go up, but it's hard to get down. The limb for your feet is never

where you think it is. Poor Jimmie tried, and Billie and Johnnie helped him, but he didn't dare turn around to go down, backward, and that's the only way you can get down a tree, unless you're a squirrel.

Then Jimmie began to get frightened. He knew it was time for him to go home, but it began getting darker and darker and darker, and there he was right in the top of the tree, as far away from the ground as ever. He tried once more, but he didn't dare let go of one branch with his bill, while he put his foot down on another limb below, and there he was. Oh, what an unpleasant situation to be in, to say the least!

"Oh, I'll never get down!" cried Jimmie. "I wish I'd stayed on the ground!"

Billie and Johnnie began to get frightened, too, for it was partly their fault, and they were just going off for some kind of help, though what kind they didn't know, when they heard a noise.

It was a swishing, swooping, swoshing noise, and who should fly down out of the sky but that good, kind fishhawk, who once carried Billie and Johnnie on his big back to Lincoln Park. As soon as the squirrels saw him they cried out:

"Oh, please help Jimmie Wibblewobble down! He's in a tall tree and can't reach the ground."

"Why, of course, to be sure," replied the kind fishhawk, and he alighted in the tree, and Jimmie got upon his strong, broad back, and the fishhawk flew gently to the earth, and that's how Jimmie got down. And maybe he wasn't glad of it! I know I am, anyhow.

Now, listen: the moving man didn't get my typewriter, after all, so if we have cocoanut-chocolate-mustard-apple-pie cake for supper, I can tell you a story to-morrow night, and it will be about the party Alice and

Lulu had, and what happened at it. Something wonderful, too, let, me tell you.

STORY XXIV

THE WIBBLEWOBBLES' PARTY

There was great excitement in the duck pen. And the reason for it was that Lulu and Alice were going to have a party. It was the first party they had ever had, and it was on their birthday. You see, it was this way: Lulu and Alice both had the same birthday; that is, they, were twins. Jimmie was a day older than they were, and he wasn't a twin. There, now I've explained it all to you, and I'll get on with the story.

Well, Mamma Wibblewobble arranged for the party. She did all the baking and got the ice cream ready and made the pies and tarts, and Alice and Lulu sent out the invitations. They were written on nice little pieces of white birch bark that Johnnie and Billie Bushytail gnawed off the trees for the little duck girls.

Of course, Johnnie and Billie were invited, and so was Sammie Littletail, and Susie and Sister Sallie, and Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail, and Mr. and Mrs. Littletail, and Uncle Wiggily Longears, and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, and Grandfather Goosey-Gander, and Bully, the frog, and the goldfish, and, let me see, who else? Oh, of course, the fairy prince. Alice would not have had him left out for anything.

Alice and Lulu had their best hair ribbons on and their new dresses, and were all dressed up for the party nearly an hour before it was time. Jimmie got ready, too. That is, he put on a clean collar and a new, red necktie, and he looked very nice. But he really didn't care much about

the party. He said he and the boys would go off by themselves and talk about baseball.

"No," said his mother, "you must not do that. I want you and the boys to entertain the little girls. Be nice, now, Jimmie."

So Jimmie said he would, and pretty soon the company began to come. Bully, the frog, hopped along first, and right after him came Grandfather Goosey-Gander, and, would you believe me, he never said a word about Jimmie breaking his window that time.

"We are very glad to see you," said Alice and Lulu, as they stood at the front door to receive their friends. Aunt Lettie, the nice old lady goat, was also there, and as the guests came up, she called out:

"Now, girls, walk right in the bedroom and put your things on the bed. You boys take your things in Jimmie's room." Oh, it was a real party, let me tell you.

Uncle Wiggily was the last to arrive, and you know why that was. It was because his rheumatism hurt him so. But he finally got there, and then the party was complete; that is, all but the fairy prince, and even the goldfish didn't know what had become of him.

First the boys all stayed on one side of the room and the girls on the other, but when Alice said, "Let's play spin the platter," they all cried out, "Oh, yes, let's do it." And they used one of Mamma Wibblewobble's dishes for the platter, and didn't break it a bit. Jimmie was "it" part of the time, and so was Johnnie Bushytail.

"Now let's play going to Jerusalem," proposed Lulu, and they did, Grandfather Goosey-Gander whistling through his bill, just like a fife, to make the music. Then they played blind-duck-bluff, and post-office and clap-in clap-out, and forfeits and, oh, such lots of games that I can

hardly remember them. Oh, yes, there was one more, puss in the corner, and whom do you suppose was the puss? Why the little kittie; Lulu's little kittie, you know, that Aunt Lettie thought had come from the pussy-willows.

"When are we going to eat?" asked Bushytail, after a while, and he spoke out loud.

"Hush!" cried Sister Sallie. "You mustn't ask that, Billie; it isn't polite!"

"Well, I wanted to know," said the little boy squirrel.

"Bless your heart!" exclaimed Aunt Lettie. "Of course you do. It must be time to serve the refreshments. I'll go ask Mrs. Wibblewobble."

"I don't want refreshments," objected Billie, in a whisper to Sister Sallie. "I'm hungry, and I want something to eat!"

"Hush!" cried his little sister again. "Refreshments are good things to eat!"

"Oh," said Billie, and just then in came Mamma Wibblewobble and Aunt Lettie and Mrs. Bushytail and Mrs. Littletail and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, all of whom helped serve the good things to eat.

Oh, what a lot of refreshments there were, including maple sugar, hickorynut ice cream and chocolate-covered carrots, and cornmeal made into little balls with cocoanut marshmallow on the outside, and candied cabbage leaves, and water-cress flavored with spearmint, and the land knows what!

Well, those children at Alice's and Lulu's party ate so much it's a wonder that they ever got home. They had a lovely time, though Alice felt disappointed because the fairy prince didn't come, and everyone wished Alice and Lulu many happy returns, and Bully, the frog, said:

"When *you* have a party, Jimmie, I'm coming to that, too."

"Sure," answered Jimmie. "I'll have one next week, if mamma will let me," for you see he found he liked parties better than he thought he would.

Well, they played some more games, including one called hide the peanut, and then it was time to go home; and now comes the queer part of it. Just as they were all saying good-night, and Uncle Wiggily was looking for his crutch, there sounded out in the woods three blasts from a silver trumpet. "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!"

You know, just like when the procession starts in a circus, and who should come riding up to the ducks' house but a little boy, all dressed in silver and gold, with a long white plume in his hat and he was on a white horse. Once more the trumpet sounded, and the boy called out:

"Am I too late for the party?"

"Yes, you are," said Uncle Wiggily, leaning on his crutch, which he found behind the door. "But who are you?"

"Me? I am the fairy prince!" cried the boy, and the trumpets blew again.

"What? Not the mud turtle fairy prince?" asked Alice, fanning herself, so she wouldn't faint.

"The very same," answered the boy. "I got tired of being a mud turtle, but I am still a fairy prince!"

"I don't believe it!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "You are only a little boy on a horse, and not a fairy prince at all!"

"Wait, and you shall see!" cried the boy, waving his hand, and the silver trumpet blew again, "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!" and the horse reared up on his hind legs. "I certainly am the fairy prince, and to prove it I will do something wonderful. Come to the woods to-morrow, Uncle Wiggily Longears, and see!"

"What will I see?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"You will see a red fairy," answered the boy who used to be mud turtle, "and the red fairy will do something wonderful for you."

"Oh!" cried Uncle Wiggily, "I don't believe in fairies!"

But, all the same, he had to, after what happened, for he went back to the woods, and met a red fairy, and the red fairy stopped Uncle Wiggily's rheumatism for a time, as you can find out by reading the first book of this series, entitled "Sammie and Susie Littletail," which tells a lot about two little rabbit children and their friends, as well as about Uncle Wiggily Longears.

Now I've reached the end of this story, but there's another one for to-morrow night, in case you don't hit anybody with your bean shooter, and it's going to be about Lulu and the Golden fairy.

STORY XXV

LULU AND THE GOLDEN FAIRY

Once upon a time it was raining very hard one morning. It was just when Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble were looking out of the window of the duck pen, getting ready for school.

"Jimmie, is your hair combed?" asked his mamma.

"No, ma'am," he answered; "but I'm just going to comb it."

"And did you brush your teeth?"

"No, mamma, but I'm just going—"

"Now, now, Jimmie, that's what you always say. Hurry to the bathroom and clean your teeth at once, or else there'll be a dentist coming to the school looking into your mouth and goodness knows what will happen then. Hurry, now, or you'll be late."

Jimmie cleaned his teeth quickly, and ran on to school so he wouldn't be late and get a bad mark. What's that? You didn't know ducks had teeth? Well, the next time you get a chance, when a duck opens his mouth real wide, you look in, and maybe you'll see them. They're very small, I know, but that doesn't count.

Well, Lulu and Alice ran on ahead, and Jimmie came following after. He wasn't late at school because he met Bully the frog, who hopped, and so

Jimmie had to run to keep up. The little boy duck was the first one in the classroom, and the teacher said:

"Why, Jimmie, this is a delightful surprise. You are not late this morning, though you were every other day this week."

"Yes, ma'am," was all Jimmie said, as he took his seat.

Well, you should have seen it rain! Honestly, I don't know when it ever rained so hard before; maybe not since the animals came out of the ark, or the last time I wanted to go to a picnic. Some of the kindergarten children got quite wet, because, you see, they were so little that they couldn't hold their umbrellas up straight. And even some of the high school girls got wet, too; but they didn't mind.

Jimmie and his sisters didn't need an umbrella, for, you know, water always runs off a duck's back, and doesn't do a bit of harm. It rained when the duck children got home from school, and it was still raining when Mrs. Wibblewobble said:

"My dears, I don't like to ask you to go out in the storm again, but I do wish you would run over to Grandfather Goosey-Gander's house. He is ill, and I want to send him some hot watercress tea."

Now Alice didn't want to go because her foot, that she once had cut on a stone, pained her. And Jimmie, well, no sooner had he gotten in the house, and taken some bread and butter, with jam on it, than he had run out in the rain again, to play with Bully, the frog. That left only Lulu to go to Grandfather Goosey-Gander's house, but she said she didn't mind in the least, and afterward she was very glad she went, for she saw a most wonderful sight. Just you wait, and I'll tell you about it.

So Mrs. Wibblewobble put the hot tea in a tin pan, and covered it over with a burdock leaf, to keep the rain out, and then she put some cold

potatoes in a dish, for she thought the old gentleman duck might like them as well. Then Lulu started off through the woods to go to her grandfather's house. It was still raining, but she didn't mind, and pretty soon, oh, maybe in about ten quacks, she came to where Mr. Gander lived.

Well, you would have felt sorry for him if you could have seen him. There he was, sitting on a stool, with his feet in a pail of hot water, and seven bottles of medicine on a table at his right wing, and six bottles of pills on a table at his left wing, and there was a blanket up around his neck, and he had a nightcap on, and he was groaning something terrible; yes, really he was.

"Oh, grandfather!" cried Lulu. "Are you very sick?"

"Yes," he replied, "I am very sick. I think I have the pip, or maybe the epizoodic."

"Which is worse?" asked Lulu, as she set the hot tea and the cold potatoes on the table.

"They are both worse," answered the old gentleman duck. "That is, they seem so, when you have them both at once. But I think I would feel better if I had a hot cornmeal poultice on the back of my neck. Only I can't make it and put it there, for I can't take my feet out of the hot water, and I don't know where the cornmeal is, and I'm home all alone, for my wife has gone shopping."

"Oh, I'll make it for you," said Lulu very kindly. "I know where the cornmeal is." So she went to get some, and, on the way to the meal box she began to think:

"Wouldn't it be lovely if a blue fairy, or a green one or a purple one, or even a skilligimink colored one would appear now? I would ask her to

make grandfather better. But I don't s'pose one will come, for I never have any luck seeing fairies," and she sighed three times as she opened the cornmeal box.

Then, all of a sudden, as she lifted the cover, as true as I'm telling you, if she didn't see something all glittering and shining down in one corner of the box. At first she thought it was the yellow meal, but then she saw that it was a little creature, all gold, with shimmering wings, like those of a humming bird.

"Oh!" cried Lulu, "are you a fairy?"

"Yes," replied the little creature, "I am the golden cornmeal fairy. I have been shut up here for ever and ever so long, and I thought I would never get out. But, since you have let me out, I will do anything in the world for you," and she waved her golden wings, and sang a jolly, golden song about diamonds.

"Will you?" cried Lulu. "Then please make my grandfather better, for he is very sick and has to take thirteen kinds of medicine."

"I will make him well," said the fairy, as she flew out of the box, "and it is very kind of you to ask that, instead of something for yourself. Now, you make a nice hot poultice of this meal, which is magical, and put it on the back of his neck.

"Then you say this fairy word: Bibbilybab-bilyboobily-bag,' and see what happens. But don't tell your grandfather I am a fairy; in fact, say nothing to any one about it, for we fairies are going away for a time, but we may come back later." Then the golden fairy waved her wings and disappeared.

But Lulu did just as she had been told, even to saying that magical word, and, my gracious! if Grandfather Goosey-Gander didn't get all well in a

second, and he thanked Lulu very much. She felt sorry about the fairy disappearing so suddenly, but you can't always have fairies, you know. Now, if you girls don't lose your pink hair ribbon I'll tell you to-morrow night about Jimmie and the black cow.

STORY XXVI

JIMMIE AND THE BLACK COW

Lulu Wibblewobble felt quite proud of having seen the golden fairy in the corn meal box. In fact she was the only one of her family who saw a fairy for ever and ever so long after that, because the fairies happened to go away from that part of the country.

Of course, Lulu wondered how the tiny creature got into the meal box, and she wondered if she might tell Alice and Jimmie about having seen her, but she decided she had better not.

Now it was about a week after Lulu had taken Grandfather Goosey-Gander the hot tea and the cold potatoes, that something happened to Jimmie Wibblewobble.

It was one afternoon when he was on his way home from school, and he was all alone, for he had been kept in for missing his spelling lesson, and all the other children had gone on. You see he couldn't spell "vinegar." Of course that's an easy word, I know, but Jimmie didn't like sour things, and I suppose that's why he missed vinegar. He put the "x" and a "k" of the word in the wrong places. Anyway he was kept in, and he had to write "ketchup" on his paper fifty times.

Well, after he was let out Jimmie started off through the woods and over the fields. Pretty soon, right after he was passing along a deep, dark, dingly dell, which is a sort of little valley, with flowers and ferns growing in it, he heard a bell ring. "Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!"

went the bell. At first Jimmie thought he was near a church, but just then the bell rang differently.

This time it went: "Tinkle-tankle! Tinkle-tankle! Tinkle-tank—" just like that.

"Why!" exclaimed Jimmie. "I wonder what that can be?"

Then he went on a little farther, and he came out of the deep, dark dingle-dell, and he heard the bell more plainly still. This time it rang very rapidly, and right after it Jimmie heard a loud voice calling: "Moo! Moo! Moo! Help me, will you; will you?"

"Why!" cried Jimmie. "That's a cow!"

Then, in another moment he came from behind a big tree, and what should he see but a big, black cow, standing in a swamp. The cow was shaking her head and shaking her horns at the same time, and ringing the bell, which was fastened around her neck by a strap, and she was mooing as hard as she could moo.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Jimmie, wobbling up quite close to her. "What ever is the matter?"

"Lots and lots is the matter," answered the cow. "But aren't you afraid of me, little boy duck; afraid of me and my sharp horns?"

"Why no," answered Jimmie, after he had thought it over for a minute or two. "I don't believe I am afraid of you. Why should I be afraid?"

"No reason at all; none in the world," replied the cow. "But since I'm in trouble so many creatures seem to be afraid of me. I saw a frog hopping past, and I asked him to help me, but I guess he was afraid I'd step on him, so he wouldn't come near, but hopped off as far as he could."

"That must have been Bully," said Jimmie. "He's afraid of lots of things. But maybe he was in a hurry," he added, for he did not want to say that Bully was afraid if the frog wasn't frightened, you know.

"Well," agreed the cow, "maybe he was. Then a rabbit boy hopped past, and I asked him to help me, but he was afraid, too."

"That must have been Sammie Littletail," said Jimmie. "But I don't believe he was afraid. Sammie is very brave. Maybe he was in a hurry."

"Well," admitted the cow, "maybe he was. But then two little squirrel boys came along, and I asked them to help me, but they ran away, frisking their tails. I guess they were afraid."

"No," answered Jimmie, "they weren't afraid. They were Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, and the reason they ran was to get some one to help you, for they are very kind. Maybe Bully and Sammie will bring some one to help you, also. But what seems to be the matter?"

"My foot is caught under a stone," said the cow, and she blinked her big brown eyes as fast as she could. In fact, they opened and shut so rapidly that big tears came from them, and splashed down her nose.

"Oh! I am so sorry!" cried Jimmie. "Your foot caught under a stone!"

"Wait a minute! Hold on!" exclaimed the cow. "That is not the worst of it! You have not heard all! My foot is under a stone, and the stone is under water, so I can't see to get my foot out. That's why I feel so badly about it. You can see for yourself, Johnnie—"

"My name is Jimmie," said the little boy duck quickly.

"Well, Jimmie, then," went on the cow. "You can see for yourself how it is, or, rather, you can't see, for the water is in the way," and then Jimmie noticed that one of the cow's hoofs was down in a puddle of water, and

no matter how hard she pulled she couldn't get loose from that stone; no, sir, any more than you can tie a string to one of your teeth and get the tooth loose—that is, not counting a tooth that needs pulling, of course.

"Well," remarked Jimmie, after he had looked very carefully at the puddle where the cow's foot was, "it's too bad."

"It certainly is," agreed the cow. "You see if the stone wasn't under water I could see to loosen it with my horn, but as it is I can't, and I've tried several times," and she tried once more, just to show she was telling the truth.

"I've been here some time," the cow went on, "and no one seems able to help me," and she mooed some more, and the bell tinkled some more, and more of her tears fell splish-splash in the puddle of water, making it bigger than ever.

"I will help you!" cried Jimmie, suddenly. "I am a duck, and I know all about water!"

So he jumped right in that puddle, and he commenced to splash with his wings and his yellow feet, and my goodness gracious sakes alive! if in about two quacks he didn't have all the water splashed out of that hole where the poor cow's foot was fast.

Then the cow could see to loosen the stone with her horn, and she could walk home. And because Jimmie was so kind she gave him a pail of milk to take to the duck pen for Alice and Lulu. Now to-morrow night the story will be about Alice and the puppy dogs, providing the automobile does not turn upside down and spill me out.

STORY XXVII

ALICE AND THE PUPPY DOGS

Alice Wibblewobble had been over to pay a visit to Sister Sallie, the little squirrel-sister of Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, and she had ever so much fun; and a good time, and such a nice supper! ending up with butternut ice cream, with maple sugar for dessert. Well, before Alice knew it, night had come, and it was all dark.

"Oh! dear!" she cried, "I didn't know it was so late."

"Are you afraid to go home in the dark?" asked Mrs. Bushytail.

"No, not exactly," answered Alice, "but you see it's so dark I might tumble into a hole, or cut my foot again on a sharp stone. I'm not exactly afraid of the dark, but—"

"Oh! I understand," said Mamma Bushytail. "But I hardly know what to do," she went on. "My husband is away this evening, or he would take you home, and Billie and Johnnie are over at Grandpa Lightfoot's, and I'm so busy getting through my spring housecleaning, and sewing a new dress for Sister Sallie, that I don't believe I could spare the time to go."

"Oh! I wouldn't think of asking you," spoke Alice quickly, but she looked out into the dark, and she didn't feel very happy, even if she had just eaten a large plate of butternut ice cream.

"Couldn't you stay all night, my dear?" asked Sister Sallie's mother.

"No, I'm afraid my mamma would worry," replied Alice.

"Perhaps Jimmie will come for you pretty soon," suggested Sister Sallie, and then she hummed that little verse about going hippity-hop to the barber shop to buy a lolly-pop lally. You remember it, I dare say.

"Maybe he will," agreed Alice, so she and Sister Sallie played another game, but it got darker and darker, and no Jimmie came, and then Alice knew she must start for home, or her papa and mamma would be worried. But she didn't like to go out in the black night, and she was almost ready to cry, and didn't know what to do, when, all of a sudden, Sister Sallie called out:

"Oh, mamma, I know the very thing! I'll run next door, to where Mrs. Bow Wow lives, and ask her to send Jackie and Peetie home with Alice."

"Who are Peetie and Jackie?" asked the little girl duck.

"They are puppy dogs," replied Sister Sallie, "and the cutest ones you ever saw! Oh, they are darlings! They'll go home with you through the woods, because they are very brave. Some day they will grow to be big dogs, and guard the house. I'll ask Mrs. Bow Wow, their mamma, to let them take you home."

"That will be a good plan," agreed Mrs. Bushytail. "Run in and ask Mrs. Bow Wow, Sister Sallie."

So Sister Sallie ran in next door, and pretty soon she came back with two of the cutest puppy dogs Alice had ever seen.

"Which one is Peetie and which one is Jackie?" Alice asked, as they tumbled about on the floor, getting up and falling down again.

"I am Peetie," answered one. "You can tell that because I am all white with a black spot on my nose."

"And I am Jackie," said his brother. "I am all black, with a white spot on my nose. So you see it is easy to tell us apart."

"Yes," agreed Alice with a laugh, "I see; that is, I would see if you kept still long enough, only you don't, for you wiggle and tumble about so much. But will you please take me home?"

"Of course we will," answered Jackie, rubbing the black spot on his brother's nose with his paw. Just then, if those two puppy dogs didn't see one of Papa Bushytail's boots, and, land sakes alive! if one didn't grab one end and one the other end, and they began to pull and growl. Puppy dogs always do such things, you know.

"Oh! Oh! You mustn't do that," cried Mamma Bushytail. "You must take Alice home."

"We will," answered Peetie, rubbing the black spot on his own nose with his little white paw. "We were only doing this for practice. Come on, Alice! Bow-wow! Bow-wow!"

So pretty soon, after a while, oh, not so very long, Alice started for the duck pen, with Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow tumbling over each other in their eagerness to see which would walk at her right wing, and which at her left. Well, weren't those puppy dogs brave, though, to go out in the dark night? They never thought anything about it, really; any more than you mind going to bed in the dark.

Then, all of a sudden, as they were walking through a very dismal place in the woods, Jackie began to growl.

"Oh, don't do that!" cried Alice, "you frighten me! Did you see a burglar or a wolf?"

"Why, I only growled because I smelled a bone," said Jackie, and he laughed, and fell over and over, turning a complete somersault.

"I smelled the bone first!" cried Peetie, "and I'm going to have it!" Then the two of them made a rush for the nice, juicy bone, and they each got hold of it and began to pull, one on one end and one on the other, and they fell down and slipped and stumbled all over in the darkness, getting mixed up in the leaves, growling and snarling; but, of course, it was all in fun, you know, for the puppy dogs loved each other.

"Oh, don't do that, Peetie!" begged Alice, touching one of the puppy dogs with her foot. "Don't tumble about so, Peetie!"

"I'm not Peetie; I'm Jackie!" was the answer. "Can't you tell by the white spot on my nose? Peetie has a black spot."

"I can't see very well in the dark," replied Alice.

Then something very funny happened, for when Jackie opened his mouth to speak to Alice he had to let go of the bone, and of course Peetie ran off with it and hid it. But that was a good thing, for they couldn't pull on it any more, and when Peetie came back they both rubbed noses, and went on through the dark woods, taking Alice home.

They had only one accident. That is, they fell down a hole, but they weren't hurt at all, I'm glad to say. Then, when Alice was safe in the duckpen, the puppy dogs ran back home and went right to sleep.

Now, if you don't spill the salt in the sugar bowl, I'm going to tell you to-morrow night about Jimmie and Jackie.

STORY XXVIII

JIMMIE AND JACKIE BOW WOW

When Alice reached the duckpen that night, after she had gone visiting Sister Sallie, and was brought home by the puppy dogs, she told her folks all about it.

"Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, eh?" remarked Jimmie, her brother, when she had told their names. "I never heard of them. They must be new around here."

"They are," answered Alice. "But they are just as cute as they can be; really they are."

"Cute, eh?" asked Jimmie. "Can they play ball?"

"I don't know," replied his sister. "But you ought to see them pull on that old boot and the bone! Oh, it was too funny!"

"And they took good care of you, didn't they," asked Lulu.

"Indeed, they did," answered Alice. "They weren't afraid of anything, even when an owl hooted."

So the next day, which was Saturday, when there wasn't any school, Jimmie started off with his wooden bat over his shoulder, his catching glove under one wing and his ball under the other.

"Where are you going?" asked his mother.

"I'm going over to Mrs. Bow Wow's house to see if I can find the puppy dogs," he said. "I want to get acquainted with them."

"All right, Jimmie, but be sure to wipe your feet if you go in Mrs. Bow Wow's house, and don't forget to take off your cap and say 'yes, ma'am,' and 'no, ma'am,' Jimmie."

"S'posin' she doesn't ask me anything?" inquired Jimmie. "What'll I say?"

"Well, then, of course, you needn't say anything; but be polite," warned the little boy duck's mother, for sometimes he forgot, though he didn't mean to.

Well, he was walking along through the woods, and over the green fields where the dandelions were just coming up, looking like buttons on a policeman's coat, if the policeman's coat was green instead of blue, and I think green would be a nice color. But no matter about that.

Jimmie was walking along, when, all of a sudden, he heard a little growl. At first he thought it was the bad fox after him again, but in a moment he saw a little black ball of fur rolling along, and then he saw a little white spot, and he thought that might be Sammie Littletail, only he knew the rabbit boy never growled. Then, all at once, if that ball of fur didn't unroll, and there stood a puppy dog!

"Hello!" called Jimmie Wibblewobble, real friendly-like.

"Hello!" answered the puppy dog.

"Are you Peetie or Jackie Bow Wow?" asked the little boy duck, for he knew the puppy dog must be one or the other.

"I'm Jackie," was the answer. "Can't you tell? I'm all black with a white spot on my nose, and my brother, Peetie, is all white with a black spot on

his nose. See? I'm black with a black spot—no, I mean I'm black with a white spot, and Jackie he's black—no, hold on—he's white—no, I'm Jackie, and he's Peetie—he's white with a white—no, a black spot—"

"Oh, for mercy sakes, stop!" cried Jimmie. "I'm all tangled up with white spots and black spots!"

"So am I," admitted Jackie. "It's hard to tell who I am, sometimes."

"Is it, really?" asked Jimmie.

"Yes, it is. In fact I'm mixed up now. Would you kindly look and tell me if I have a white or a black spot on my nose. I could look myself, only it makes me cross-eyed, and I don't like that."

So Jimmie looked, very carefully, and he saw a white spot on the puppy dog's nose, and told him so.

"It's all right. I'm Jackie then," answered the little fellow. "I thought I was, but it's best to make sure."

"Can you play ball?" asked Jimmie. "My sister told me about you. It was very kind of you to bring her home. You haven't lived here very long, have you?"

"Not very. But I'm glad I could help your sister. She is a nice girl."

"Where's your brother, Peetie?" asked Jimmie.

"Oh, he's gone to the store for mamma."

"Then let's you and I have a catch until he comes back. You can play ball, can't you?"

"Of course."

So Jimmie tossed the ball to Jackie, and the puppy dog stood up on his hind legs and caught it in his front paws, and then he fell right over, ker-thump, and rolled along the ground.

"Here!" cried the boy duck. "That's no way to play ball! You must stand up and catch."

"Oh, I know that," declared Jackie. "You see I was only practising at biting the ball with my teeth. I always bite things to sharpen my teeth so I can gnaw big bones when I get to be a big dog."

"Well, you needn't sharpen your teeth on my new ball!" cried Jimmie, and he felt a little angry; not much, you know, but a little and he took the ball and was going home, for he didn't like Jackie, he thought.

It was too bad the little creatures had had a falling-out so soon, but please wait just a moment and see what happens. No sooner had Jimmie started to go home—Jackie didn't know why, you see, for he didn't know it was wrong to bite the ball—no sooner, I say, did Jimmie start home, than out from the bushes jumped a great big water rat, with ugly, cruel, sharp teeth and wicked eyes.

Oh, how frightened Jimmie was, for he knew big water rats ate ducks. But what do you suppose Jackie, that puppy dog, did? Why he just growled away down in his throat, and he stuck up one ear as far as it would go, and he let the other ear fall down as far as it would fall, and he opened his mouth, and he showed his teeth, that he had sharpened on Jimmie's ball, and he jumped right at that bad rat! Yes, sir, right at him, growling all the while!

At first the rat was going to fight, but when it saw how brave Jackie was, it turned and ran away. And then that puppy dog just put his little tail between his legs, and howled, and ran away, too; Jimmie waddling after

him. You see Jackie was frightened after it was all over, but he had frightened the rat worse yet.

"How brave you were!" cried Jimmie, when they were at Mrs. Bow Wow's house. "You were very brave, indeed."

"Do you really think so?" asked Jackie. "Then I must be."

"You can bite my ball all you want to," went on Jimmie, and then Peetie came home from the store, and they all had a fine time playing catch. Now to-morrow night I'm going to tell you about Grandfather Goosey-Gander's tall hat, if I don't lose a penny off the front stoop.

STORY XXIX

GRANDFATHER GOOSEY-GANDER'S TALL HAT

Jimmie Wibblewobble was in the back lots, playing ball with Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, Sammie Littletail, and Bully, the frog, besides some other friends of his. They were having a fine time, knocking the ball this way and that, just as if the ball didn't care what happened to it. When it came Jimmie's turn to bat, he called out:

"Watch me knock it away over the tree," and land sakes, goodness me and a pop-corn cake! if that ball didn't fly away over the tree, just like a little bird. Well,—Jimmie was pretty proud, I can tell you, and he was such a good hitter that Bully said:

"Let Jimmie knock some more balls for us to catch."

So he did, after Billie Bushytail had run to get the one that went over the tree, and brought it back.

Well, so the game went on, and pretty soon, oh, I guess it must have been about as long as it takes to eat two pieces of bread and butter, but not with jam on, mind you; I guess in about that time, it was Billie Bushytail's turn to bat. And just as he stepped up to hit the ball, if all the boy animals didn't see something black moving along by the hedge fence. It was black and round and shiny, this moving object was, and as soon as Sammie Littletail saw it he cried out:

"Oh, there's a bad fox. Let's see who can hit him."

So they all caught up stones to throw at the bad fox, to drive him away.

Jimmie had the largest stone, and he could throw the straightest, so it is no wonder he hit the tall, round, shining black thing by the hedge. But this is the funny part of it, that black thing wasn't a fox at all. No, siree!

It was Grandfather Goosey-Gander's new tall hat, and that wasn't at all funny, I do assure you. And the worst part of it was that Grandfather Goosey-Gander was under that hat! For, you know, a tall hat couldn't walk along by a hedge, all alone its own self, now, could it? Of course, I know it could if this were a fairy story, but it isn't.

Well, something dreadful happened. The stone which Jimmie threw hit grandfather's tall hat, went inside, just grazing the top of the old gentleman duck's head, and then, what do you think? Well, I don't believe you could guess if you tried a week, so I'll tell you.

That stone came out on the other side. It went right through the hat, making a hole where it went in, and another hole where it came out. Two holes; you could easily have counted them if you had been there.

Of course, as soon as Jimmie heard the noise, made by the stone which he threw, hitting the hat, he could tell by the plinkity-plunkity sound that there was going to be trouble. And there was.

Grandfather Goosey-Gander jumped up in the air. He uttered a loud quack, and then he took off his tall hat. He looked at the two ragged holes in it, and then he looked over at the boys in the field. He knew right away they had done it, but he didn't know which one. Jimmie, however, was a good boy, and he wasn't going to have any one else blamed for what *he* had done. So he ran to where his grandfather stood, sorrowfully looking at his hat, and Jimmie said:

"I did it, grandpa. I cannot tell a story. I did it with my little stone."

"Ha! Hum! Did you; eh?" cried Grandfather Goosey-Gander. "Well, that's a pretty bad thing to do, Jimmie. This is my best hat. I put it on to go down to the bank, to put money in. I mean to put money in the bank, not in the hat, of course. I always wear it when I go to the bank, so folks will know I am rich. Now I can't wear it any more. It's too bad!" And the old gentleman duck looked very sorrowful.

"Yes," agreed Jimmie, "it is too bad," for he couldn't think of anything else to say.

"You will have to pay for a new hat for me," went on his grandfather.

"I haven't any money," said Jimmie, and tears began to run down his broad, yellow bill, for the little boy duck felt pretty bad, I can tell you.

"You will have to save up all the pennies you get," decided Grandfather Goosey-Gander. "Boys should not be so careless."

"We thought you were a fox," said Billie Bushytail.

"And we all threw stones at you," added Sammie Littletail.

"But I'm the only one who hit your hat, though," admitted Jimmie.

"Do I look like a fox?" demanded the old duck. "That's what I want to know. Do I look like a fox?" Well, of course, you know he didn't, and the ball players had to admit it. "You will have to pay for my hat, Jimmie," grandpa continued, looking again at two ragged holes. "Have you any money now?"

"No," said Jimmie, and he was crying real hard by this time. Then all the other boys felt badly, too, and they were just looking in their pockets to see if they had any money, but they hadn't. All they had was some marbles, and tops, and broken knives, and chewing gum, all sticky, and some strings.

Then it began to look as if Grandfather Goosey-Gander would never have a new hat, but, all at once, there was a buzzing sound in the air, and what should come flying along but a darning needle. You know what I mean: one of those funny, long bugs sometimes called a dragon fly, with beautiful wings, and long legs and body.

"What is the trouble?" asked the darning needle, and then the boys told him about the broken hat. "Ah," said the darning needle, careless-like, "do not distress yourself, Jimmie. I know you are a good boy. To fix that hat is a mere trifle for me, and I'll do it."

And what did that dragon-fly-darning-needle do but buzz back and forth, all around the holes in Grandfather Goosey-Gander's tall hat, right through the hat itself, until he had the holes all sewed up, and you could hardly tell where they were.

Then Mrs. Spider came along, and she spun some glossy silk web over the places where the seams were, and presto-chango! if that hat wasn't as good as ever!

Well, you can just imagine how glad Jimmie was that he didn't have to pay for it. And his grandpa was pleased, too, and so were the boys. Then

the darning needle flew away, Mrs. Spider crawled off, Grandfather Goosey-Gander went to the bank, the boys played ball some more and everything was lovely.

Now, if the window curtain doesn't fly up lickety-split and come off the roller, I'll tell you to-morrow night about Jimmie flying a kite.

STORY XXX

JIMMIE WIBBLEWOBBLE'S KITE

Jimmie Wibblewobble was out flying his kite. He had made it all himself, out of sticks, and paste, and paper and strings, and it was a very fine kite indeed. It was nearly as large as the little boy duck, and it was the kind of a kite that doesn't need a tail. That was good, because a tail gets all tangled up in the weeds.

Well, Jimmie was flying his kite, and the wind was pretty strong, and the kite was pulling real hard, just like a little dog pulls, when you tie a rope to his collar, and he wants to get away. Pretty soon along came Bully, the frog.

"Does your kite pull much?" he asked.

"Does it?" replied Jimmie. "Well, I should say it did!"

"Let me hold it a minute, will you?" asked Bully, and Jimmie very kindly let him. Then along came Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, and Sammie Littletail, and they all took turns holding the kite.

Well now, in a few minutes, something dreadful is going to happen to Jimmie. I tell you in advance so you won't be frightened, and, really, there is no need to be, for I'll see to it that, after the thing happens, Jimmie will be all right again. Now if you watch, and listen closely, you can tell the moment the thing happens. It's almost time.

The wind kept growing stronger and stronger, and it blew the dust up in a cloud, and it blew bits of paper and sticks along with the dust, and raised a dreadful commotion.

Then long came Alice and Lulu Wibblewobble. They had been to the store for their mamma, and had just come back. They felt the strong wind blowing on their feathers, and Alice said to her brother:

"You had better take down your kite, Jimmie. The wind may blow it away, and you with it."

"Oh, I guess I can hold it," answered the little boy duck, as he let out some more cord. The kite was now almost out of sight, and it was pulling harder than ever.

Then, all at once, if Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the two puppy dogs, didn't come along. Jackie had his white spot on his nose, and Peetie had his black spot on his nose, so that you could tell them apart. And those two doggies felt so full of fun that they ran right up and made believe bite Jimmie's yellow heels.

Now you know it feels queer to have two puppy dogs biting your heels, even if it is only in fun, and as soon as Jimmie felt Jackie and Peetie nipping him, he turned around quickly and cried out:

"Oh, don't do that!"

But the minute he looked around, if the kite string didn't get tangled in his legs, and then if the wind didn't blow a regular strong blast, the kind that howls down the chimney on a cold night; and oh, dear me, suz-dud! if Jimmie wasn't carried right up in the air by his kite! There, I told you something would happen, and it did! Maybe you'll believe me next time.

Well, up and up and up went Jimmie, pulled by the kite, until he was quite high in the air, hanging dingling, dangling down—O! by his

yellow heels. Oh, it was a perfectly dreadful position to be in! really it was, and I'm not fooling a bit, honestly.

"Oh, oh! Save him!" cried Lulu.

"Yes, somebody get him down; please do!" added Alice, flapping her wings.

Billie Bushytail tried to jump up in the air, and grab hold of poor Jimmie, but he couldn't reach him, and then Sammie Littletail, he tried, but he couldn't reach him, and all the while poor Jimmie was being carried higher and higher by the kite.

"Save me! Oh, save me!" he cried, but there didn't seem to be any way of getting him down, and it began to look as if he would go right up to the sky.

On the ground Lulu and Alice were running here and there, flapping their wings and quacking, and Billie and Johnnie Bushytail were chattering, and as for Sammie Littletail, he made a noise just like a rabbit. Oh, there was great excitement, I can tell you!

Mr. Cock A. Doodle, the rooster, he came running out, and he crowed as loud as ever he could crow, as if that could do any good. Then he flapped his wings as hard as he could, and that didn't do any good, either. Jimmie kept going farther and farther away.

"Oh, will no one save him?" asked Lulu, crying big tears.

"Wait a minute, I'll try it!" said Bully, the frog. "I am a good jumper, and I'll jump up. Maybe I can pull the kite down." So he jumped up as high as ever he could, but it wasn't nearly high enough, and Bully came back on the ground, ker-thump, ker-bump! and Jimmie Wibblewobble kept on going up. Poor Bully hurt his ankle, too, and he was lame for some days.

"Run and tell Grandfather Goosey-Gander," cried Lulu. "Maybe he can think up a way of getting Jimmie down."

So they all ran and told the old gentleman duck, for Mr. and Mrs. Wibblewobble were away that afternoon. Grandfather Goosey-Gander hurried out, and he squinted up at Jimmie, who looked only about as big as a baby chicken now, he was so far away, and then the Grandfather flapped his wings.

"Nothing can save him!" said Grandfather Goosey-Gander, very solemnly, "Jimmie has gone to the sky!"

Then, oh, how badly Lulu and Alice felt for their little brother! and all the others felt badly, too, for they liked Jimmie. But don't get excited now. All will be well in a very few minutes. Do not fear.

Bully, the frog, made one more jump, hoping to reach the kite, and pull it down, but he might as well have tried to jump over the moon, which only a hey-diddle-diddle-cat-and-the-fiddle-cow can do. Well, it looked as if Jimmie was gone for ever, when, all at once, there was a rushing of wings, and who should appear, but a kind fish hawk, that once gave Johnnie and Billie Bushytail a ride on his back.

"I will save Jimmie!" cried the fish hawk.

So he flew up in the air, right to the kite, and, with his strong beak, he tore a hole in the paper to let the air through. Then the kite came gently down, just like a red balloon, or maybe a blue one, that you get at the circus, and some one sticks a pin in it. Yes, the kite came gently down, and Jimmie came with it, and that's how he was saved!

And, maybe he wasn't glad! Well, I just guess, and some cornstarch pudding besides! Of course Peetie and Jackie were very sorry for biting

Jimmie's heels and never did it again. Now, if I don't get stung by a bee, I'll tell you to-morrow night about Alice in a bag.

STORY XXXI

ALICE WIBBLEWOBBLE IN A BAG

You remember I told you last night about Jimmie Wibblewobble being carried up by a kite. Well, when his papa and mamma came home that evening, they heard all about it, and how much excitement there was, and they told Jimmie he must be more particular after this. He promised that he would be very careful.

"I'll fly smaller kites," he said, and he went out the next time with one about the size of a postage stamp, and that couldn't take any one up in the air, you know, except, maybe, a mosquito, and they don't count.

Well, it was about two days after this that something happened to Alice. You see she had been sent to the store for a yeast cake and some prunes, for her mamma was going to make prune bread—that is, bread with prunes in it, and it's very nice, I assure you, for I've eaten it.

As Alice was coming home, through a lonely part of the woods, where the trees were so thick that it was almost dark, she began to feel a little bit frightened. So, to stop herself from feeling scared she began to sing. If she had been a boy, she would have shouted, or if she had been Lulu she would have whistled, for Lulu could whistle as good as could Jimmie.

But instead Alice sang, and this is the song she made up so she wouldn't be frightened. You are allowed to sing it if you are not more than seven-and-three-quarters years old. If you are any older than that you will have

to have a special excuse; or some one else will have to sing it for you. Well, this is the song:

"I'm not afraid to wander
In woodlands dark and drear,
For who is there to harm me
When not a soul is near?
The birds, the trees and flowers
Are kind as kind can be,
I'm sure that not a single one
Would do a thing to me.
"The bugs and pretty butterflies
Will form a fairy band
And guard me safely while I walk
Throughout this dark woodland.
But just the same, I'll hurry,
And not stay here too long;
Because, you see, I only know
Two verses of this song."

Well, as soon as Alice finished singing, land sakes! goodness, gracious me! if a big fox didn't pop out from behind a tree, and before Alice could say "How do you do?" or even "Good afternoon," or anything like that, if he didn't grab her by the legs and put her into a bag he carried over his shoulder, and then he tied the bag tight and started to run away.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Alice. "Let me out! Please let me out of this bag, Mr. Fox, and I'll give you all the money I've got saved up in my bank! Honest, I will; every cent in my bank!"

"No," answered the fox savagely. "I don't want your money. What good would money be to me? I can't eat money! Ha! ha! ha!" and he laughed that way three times, just like a mooley cow.

"Are you going to eat me?" asked Alice, from inside the bag, where she was trembling so that she squashed the yeast cake all out, as flat as a pancake on a cold winter morning, when you have brown sausage gravy and maple syrup to pour on it.

"Eat you? Of course, I'm going to eat you!" cried the fox. "That is why I caught you. But I can't decide whether to have you boiled or roasted. It's quite trying not to know. I must make up my mind soon, however."

Then he ran on some more, over the hills, bumpity-bump, with poor Alice jouncing around in that bag, and the little duck girl wished the fox would be a long time making up his mind which way to cook her, for she thought that maybe Jimmie might come and save her in the meanwhile.

"It didn't do much good to sing that song," thought Alice, and I suppose it didn't, but you know you can't always have what you want in this world. Oh, my, no, and a bottle of cough medicine besides.

Well, the old fox hurried on, with Alice in the bag and he ran fast to get to his den, and pretty soon the little duck girl felt him coming to a stop. Then she heard some one saying:

"Ah, good day, Mr. Fox; what have you in that bag?"

"I have apples in this bag," said the fox. Oh, but wasn't he the bold, bad story-telling fox, though?

"Apples, eh?" asked the voice again, and then Alice knew right away who it was. Can you guess? No? Well, I'll tell you. It was Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the kind old muskrat lady. It was she who had asked the question.

"Oh, so you have apples in there?" Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy repeated to the fox. "Well, now, do you know," she went on, "I am very fond of apples. I wish you would give me one."

"No," answered the bad fox, "I can't. These are very special apples, very sour, in fact, and I'm sure you wouldn't like them."

"Oh, I just love sour apples," said the muskrat, moving nearer to the fox, and showing her sharp teeth, like the carpenter's chisel when he shaves the door down to make it smaller. "I just love sour apples," said the nurse.

"Oh, I made a mistake, these are sweet apples," said the fox, quickly, waggling his big tail like a dusting brush.

"I made a mistake, too," went on Miss Fuzzy-Wuzzy. "I guess I love sweet apples instead of sour ones."

"You will have to excuse me," again spoke the fox quickly. "I made two mistakes. These apples are half sweet and half sour, and not good at all."

"If there is anything I am fonder of than anything else it's a half sweet and a half sour apple," declared the muskrat, and she showed her teeth some more, as if she were smiling, only she wasn't. She was getting ready to bite the bad fox, I guess.

Just then Alice moved around in the bag, hoping Miss Fuzzy-Wuzzy would see her, and what's more, the kind muskrat nurse did. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "you have moving apples, I see. I just love moving apples."

Then the fox knew it was of no use to tell any more stories, so he started to hurry off with Alice in the bag. But Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy jumped right at him, and she bit him on the nose, and on his front legs and on his hind legs, until he was glad enough to drop the bag containing poor Alice, and run away, over the hills, as fast as he could go.

Then the muskrat gnawed open the bag, and Alice came out, her feathers all ruffled up, but she was not much hurt; only the yeast cake was all squashed out of shape, like a piece of putty. Then Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy took Alice home safely, and nothing more happened right away.

Well, now, to-morrow night, let's see. Ha! Hum! Oh, how careless of me! Of course there isn't going to be any story to-morrow night, because we're at the end of this book. You can see for yourself, if you look carefully, that there are no more stories in it; not a single one.

But, listen, as the telephone girl says; I think, in case that you liked the stories about the ducks, that I will write something about the adventures of Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow; you know, those two puppy dogs who once took Alice home after she had been on a visit to Sister Sallie, and was afraid to go out in the dark.

I have quite a number of stories about those two puppy dogs; Peetie, you know, who was all white with a black spot on his nose, and Jackie, who was all black with a white spot on his nose. So if you want to read about them you may do so in the next book of the Bed Time series, which will be called "Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow," and the book will have in it some pictures of the doggies; and tell how they had a show, and built a swing, and got lost, and ran away to join a circus, and did ever so many things that it was really astonishing; honestly it was!

Well, I think I'll say good night now, for I must get right to work on that other book. So go to sleep, and be good children, and maybe you'll dream about Peetie and Jackie—who knows?

THE END

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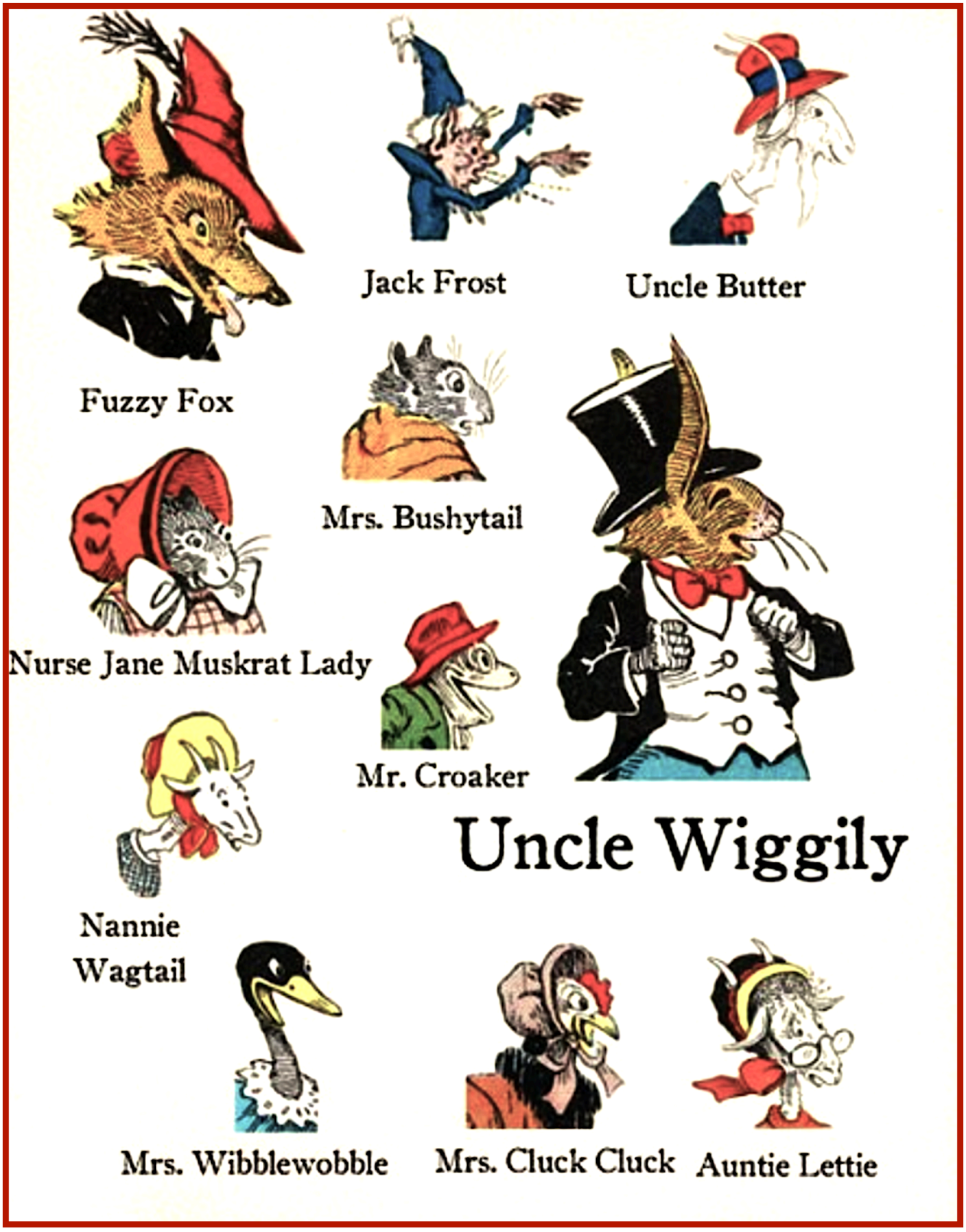
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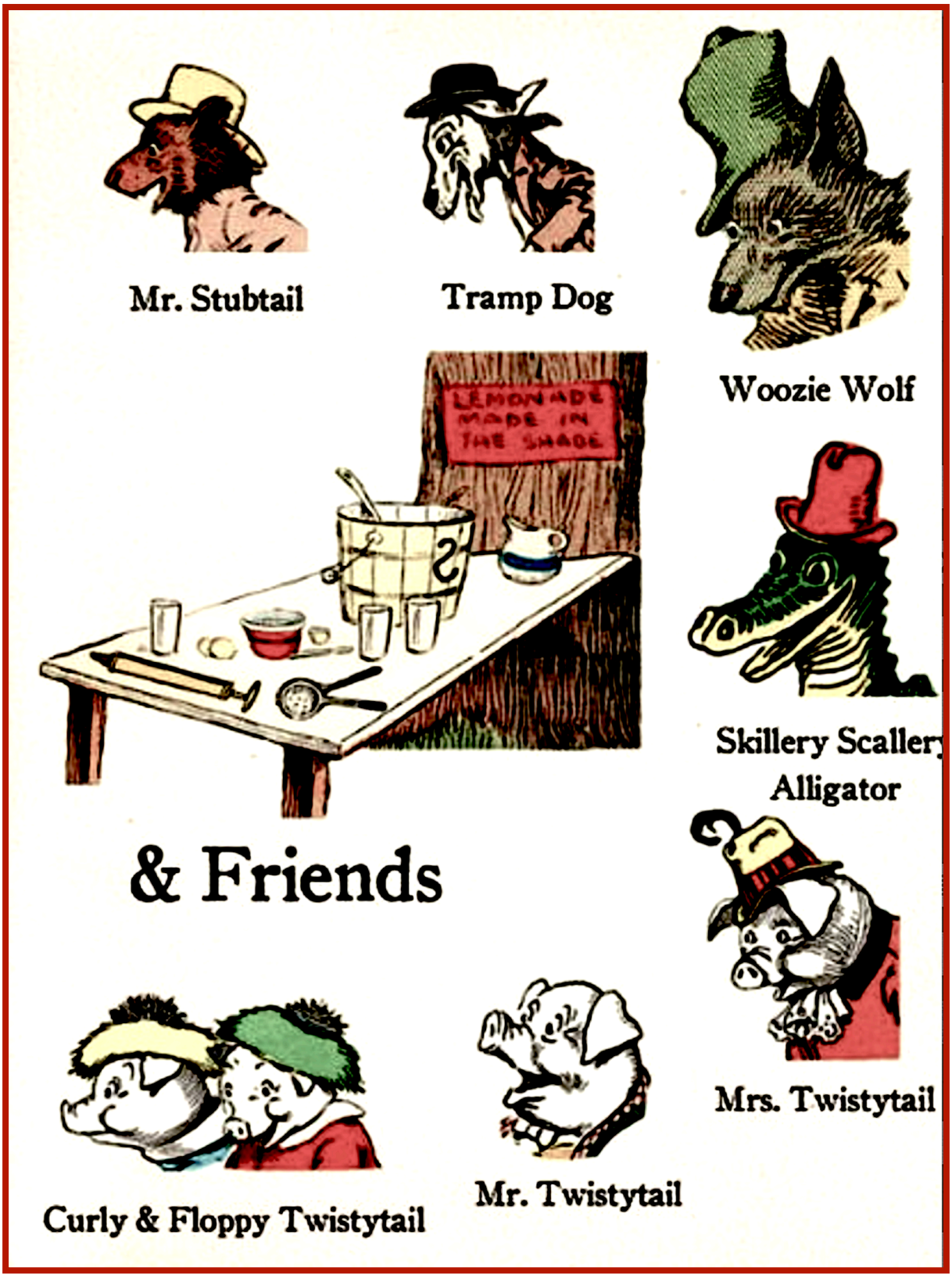
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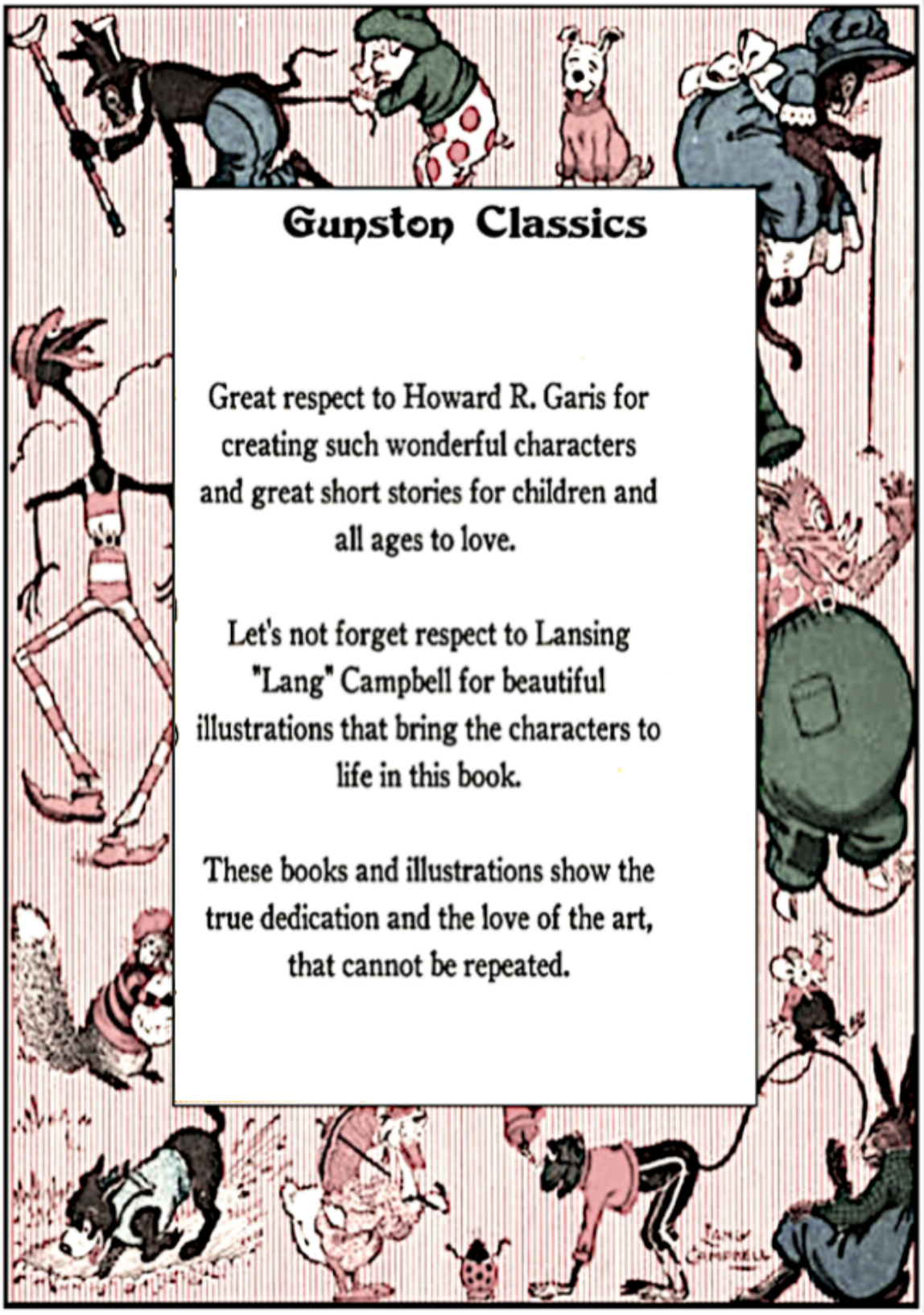
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